SERMONS

OF IOHN CALVIN, VPON THE SONGE that Ezechias made after he had bene ſicke, and afflicted by the hand of God, conteyned in the 38. Chapiter of Eſay.

¶ Tranſlated out of Frenche into Engliſhe.

1560.

☞ Newly ſet fourth and allowed, accordyng to the order appointed in the Quenes Maieſties Iniunctions.

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And are there to be ſolde at his ſhoppe vnder the Gate.

¶ Cum Gratia & priuilegio Regiæ maieſtatis.

BRITISH MUSEUM

6.45.28.
1624.

TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE, AND Christian Princesse, the Lady Katharine, Duchesse of Suffolke.

IT often falleth out in experience (my gracious & singular good Lady) that some men beynge oppressed with pouertie, tossed with worldlye aduersitye, tourmenied with payne, sorenes, & sicknes of body, and other suche cõmon matters of griefe, as the world counteth miseries & euils: Yet hauing theyr myndes armed & fournished with prepared patience, and defence of inward vnderstandyng, all these calamities can not so farre preuaile, as to make them fall, nor yet once stoupe into the state of men to be accompted miserable: but they beare them with suche constaunce, as if suche afflictions were not of such nature as other commonly do fele them, or as if those men were suche vpon whome those troubles coulde not worke theyr naturall propertie. On th' other side we se some that flowyng in earthly wealth & suffisance, free from

fortunes crueltie, healthy in bodye, and euery waye to the worldes seming blessed: yet with mynde not well instructed, or with conscience not well quieted, euen vpon such small chaunces as other can lightly beare, are vexed aboue measure with reasonlesse extremitie. Wherby appeareth that the greues of body and calamities of fortune do so farre onely extende, to afflict, or make a man miserable, as they approch to touch the mind, & assaile the soule. Which proueth that the peines and diseases of minde & soule are not only the most greuous, & most daungerous, but also they onely are peinfull & perillous, and those of the body & fortune are such as the mynde vseth, and maketh them. So as to a sicke stomacke of mynde, all bodylie matters of delite and worldely pleasures are lothesome and displeasant, as on th'other side the power of a healthy soule easely digesteth and gathereth good nouriture of the hard peines, and bitter tormentes of the body and fortune. He then, that cureth the sicke minde, or preserueth it from disease, cureth or preserueth not onely minde, but bodye also: and deserueth so much more praise and thanke, than the bodies Physiciõ, as the soule excelleth the bodie,

and

and as the curing, or preseruation of them both is to be preferred before the cure of the bodye alone. But we se dayly, when skilfull men by arte, or honest neyghbours hauyng gathered vnderstandyng of some specyall dysease & the healing therof by theyr owne experiment, do applie their knowledge to the restoring of health of any mans body in any corporall sicknesse, howe thankfully it is taken, howe muche the releued patient accompteth him selfe boũd to him by meane of whose aide and ministration he findeth him self holpen or eased. What then deserueth he, that teacheth such a receipt, wherby health both of body and mynde is preserued, & wherby if health be appaired, it may be restored, yea whereby sicknes and common miseries continuyng shall not haue so muche power to trouble a man as to make him sicke, or miserable? This receipte God the heauenly Physitian hath taught, his most excellẽt Apothecarie master Iohn Caluine hath compounded, & I your graces most bounden & humble haue put into an Englishe box, & do present vnto you. My thãkes are takẽ away & drowned by the greate excesse of duetie that I owe you: Master Caluine thinketh his paynes re-

compenſed if your grace or any Chriſtian take profit of it: bicauſe how much ſoeuer is ſpent, his ſtore is neuertheleſſe. And for God, recompenſed he can not be: but how he is continually to be thanked, your graces profeſſion of his worde, your abidyng in the ſame, the godly cõuerſation that I haue ſene in you, do proue that your ſelfe do better vnderſtand & practiſe than I can admoniſhe you.

And that you maye be aſſured, that this kinde of medicine is not hurtfull: two moſte excellent kinges, Ezechias and Dauid, beſide an infinite numbre haue taſted the lyke before you, and haue founde health therin, ſuch healthe as hathe cured them for euer, and not as common or naturall reaſons of Philoſophie doe cure a ſicke or ſoore mynde, which with eaſie and weake not well drawynge or cleanſinge plaſters, ſo ouerheale the wounde that it feſtreth and breaketh oute afreſhe wyth renewed and doublye encreaſed danger.

Suche remedye as here is conteined can no Philoſopher, no Infidele, no Papiſt miniſter. For what perfite helpe can they geue to a dyſeaſed mynde, that vnderſtande not, or beleue

leue not the onely thyng that muſte of nedefull neceſsitie be put into all medicines that maye ſerue for a tourmented ſoule, that is to ſay, the determined prouidence of almyghtie God, whiche ordreth and diſpoſeth all thynges to the beſt to them that truſte in him?

This Phyſicke reſteth onely amonge trewe beleuyng Chriſtians, who are perſwaded that whatſoeuer betideth vnto vs, his hie wiſdom that ſent it, and that ſeeth all thynges, ſent it of hys good pleaſure and decreed purpoſe, and that for oure benefite if we loue and beleue hym, thoughe oure weake vnderſtandynge knoweth not howe it ſhoulde be profitable, but naturally iudgeth it hurtefull and vnpleaſaunt. And neceſſarye it was that he whiche by vnderſtandynge of Godes hatred of ſynne and felynge of hys iuſtice, is ſubiect to fall into the moſte perillous peine and tourment of conflicte with ſinne and deſperation, ſhoulde by conceyuynge of Godes mercy, and beleuyng of his prouidence, haue helpe of the moſte and onely perfect and effectuallye working medicine.

But in heauye caſe is he, that beynge

afflicted with that daũgerous diſeaſe of the ſe lyng of Gods wrath kindled againſt him, hath not the cõſerue of beleſe of Gods prouidẽce remainyng with him, or beyng miniſtred to him either for febleneſſe of ſtomack can not receiue and brooke it, or his oppreſſed appetite beyng ouerwhelmed with groſſe faithleſſe and papiſticall humors can not abide the taſt of it. Wo is (I ſay) to them: for theyr diſeaſe is daungerous and hard to be cured. For when the wretched man findyng all helpe of man not able to vphold him from periſhing, being ſtriken with the mightie hande of God, feleth him ſelfe vnable to ſtande, no ſoundnes in his bodye, no ſtrẽgth in his limmes, no helpe of nature to reſiſt the violence of that diſeaſe that Gods diſpleaſure hath laide vpon him, ſeeth no ſigne of Gods grace in his ſoule, but the depe woundes that Gods anger hath left in his cõſcience, perceiueth no token to argue him th'elect of God and partaker of the death of his Sauiour, hearyng pronounced that the ſoule which ſinneth ſhall die, knowyng him ſelfe to haue ſinned, & felyng him ſelfe dying: alas what helpe remaineth in this extremitie? If we thinke the helpe of papiſtes, to begge and borrowe others Virgins

gins oyle that haue none to spare, to bye the superfluous workes of those men that say they haue done more than suffiseth to satisfie Gods lawe and to deserue theyr owne saluation, to appease God with suche extraordinarie deuised seruice as he neuer commaunded, and such like vnholsome stuffe as papisticall soulesleaers haue ministred to Christian patientes: If (I say) we thinke these good & sufficient medicines: alas, we do nothinge therby, but plant vntrew securitie, promise health, & performe death: the pages wherof whē the deceiued sick man feleth, he to late espieth the falshod of the murtherous Physicia. The pore damned soule in Hell tourmented with the lamentable peines that turmoile him, from whome God the onely author of ioy and comfort is absent, perceiueth to late howe wandring the wrong way from heauen, he is fallen into Hell. That selly wretche flamyng in the infernall fire feleth, alas, to late that thei which gaue him mans medicines to drincke, haue slayne his soule: they which taught him to trust of saluation by mās deuises haue set his burnyng hert in that place of flames, where th' euerlasting Chaos suffreth no droppe of Godes mercye to descende: they

which

which taught him to seeke health any other where thā in the determined purpose of God, that hath sent his own sonne for our redēptiō, haue spoiled him of all benefit of redemption. He feleth at length all to late howe by faulte of ill diet and throughe poisonous potions which his iguoraunt corrupted and traiterous Physicion suffered him to vse, and bad him to take, he lieth dead eternally.

But on th'other side, when the beleuynge Christian falleth (as God hathe made none to stande wherby they should not nede his mercye to raise them when they are fallen) he knoweth whither to reache his hande to be raised vp againe: beyng stong with the stinge of the scorpion he knoweth howe with oyle of the same scorpion to be healed agayne: beyng wounded with the iustice of God that hateth sinne, he knoweth howe with the mercy of the same God that pardoneth sinne to haue hys peine asswaged and hurt amended. He knoweth that whome God hath from eternitie appointed to liue, shal neuer die, how soeuer sicknesse threaten: no misery, no tentation, no perill shall anaile to his euerlasting ouerthrowe. He knoweth that his saf̃tie is much more surely

rely repoſed in Gods moſte ſtedfaſt and vn-
changeable purpoſe, and in the moſt ſtrong &
almightye hande of the alknowynge and al-
working God, than in the wauering will and
feble weaknes of man. This healeth the Chri-
ſtians ſicknes, this preſerueth him from death,
this maketh him to liue for euer. This medi-
cine is in this litle boke brought frō the plen-
tifull ſhop & ſtorehouſe of Gods holye teſta-
mēt, where Gods euerabiding purpoſe frō be-
yond beginning is ſetfourth, to the euerlaſting
ſaluatiō of ſome, & eternall cōfuſion of other.
Beſide that, this boke hath not only the medi-
cine, but alſo an example of the nature of the
diſeaſe, & the meane how to vſe & apply the
medicine to thē that be ſo diſeaſed. For when a
man languiſhing in corporall ſicknes, heareth
his neighboure reporte vnto him, or himſelfe
hathe before time ſene in an other the ſame
cauſe of ſicknes, the ſame maner of fits, paſſiōs,
alteratiōs, & in euery point the ſame qualities
of ſicknes, & the ſame diſpoſitiō of body that
he knoweth & feleth in him ſelf: it geueth him
aſſurāce, & maketh him to know that he is ſick
of the ſame diſeaſe that th' other was: wherby
knowing howe th' other was healed, what diet

he kept, what Physicke he toke, he doeth with the greater boldnes, confidence of mynde, and desire, call for, taste, and gredely receyue that healthfull & lifefull medicine wherby he saw and knew his neighbour healed, and with the greater care kepeth the same diet wherewith he saw & knew th' other preserued. So here this good soules Physiciã hath brought you where you maye se lyinge before youre face the good king Ezechias, somtime chillinge and chattering with colde, somtime languishing & meltyng away with heate, nowe fresing, now fryeng, nowe spechelesse, nowe crying out, with other suche piteous panges & passions wrought in his tender afflicted spirit, by giltie conscięce of his owne fault, by terrible consideration of Gods iustice, by cruell assaultes of the tyrannous enemie of mans saluation, vexynge hym in muche more lamentable wise than any bodely feuer can worke, or bodyly flesh can suffer. On th' other side for his helpe, you se him sometyme throwe vp his gastly eyen, starynge wyth horrour, and scant discernynge for peine and for want of the lyuely moisture to fede the brightnes of theyr sight. You se him sometyme yeldyngly stretch oute, sometyme struglinglye

throw

throwe his weakned legges not able to ſuſtein his feble body: ſometime he caſteth abrode, or holdeth vp his white & blodles hand toward the place whether his ſoule longeth: ſometyme with fallyng chappes, he breatheth out vnperfect ſoũdes, gaſping rather thã calling for mercy & helpe. Theſe thinges being here laid open to ſight and remainyng in remembraunce, (as the horrour and piteous ſpectacle can not ſuffre it to fall out of a Chriſtian tender minde) if we feele oure ſelues in like anguiſhe, we finde that the diſeaſe is the ſame that Ezechias had, and ſo by conuenience of reaſon muſte by the ſame meane be healed. Thẽ behoueth vs to remember or to be infourmed by oure diligent Phyſitian or charitable neighbour, howe we ſawe Ezechias healed, whome we imagine in this Boke to ſee, both dying, reuiued, and walking after health recouered. There we ſe the heauẽly Phyſician anoynt him with the merciful Samaritãs oyle, purge the oppreſſing humors with true repentaũce, ſtrengthen his ſtomack with the holſome conſerue of Gods eternall decree, and expell his diſeaſe, and ſet hym on foote with aſſured faith of Gods mercy, and ſtaieng his yet vnſtedy pace & foltring legges

with

with the ſwete promyſſes of Gods almyghtye goodnes. So learne we what Phyſicians helpe we ſhall vſe: and this medicine beyng offered vs, we are bolde to take it, bycauſe we knowe it wyll heale vs. And beyng healed, knowyng and hearyng it confeſſed, that ſinne was the cauſe and nouriſhement of Ezechias diſeaſe, we learne a newe diet, and to fede as Ezechias his Phyſician and oures apointeth, abſteinyng from thinges hurtfull taking things healthfull as he preſcribeth. So doth the Chriſtiã atteine his health, ſo beynge attemed he preſerueth it for euer. And as it is true that ſeconde & returned ſickneſſes by ſurfit or miſdemenour are moſt cruell and daungerous, ſo holdeth he yet this alſo for trueth, that to this Phyſiciã with this medicine, no diſeaſe neuer ſo long rooted, neuer ſo oft retourned, is vncurable. Beyng then thus muche beholden to this Phyſician we muſt nedes confeſſe that we owe vnto him our life and health, & all that we be or haue. And for his faithful miniſter maſter Caluine, I beſeche your grace wyth me, to wiſhe hym Gods benefit of eternall happie life for his reward, euen as I wiſhe your grace continuall health of life and ſoule for your preſeruation,

not

not onely for this newe yeare, but also for the tyme that shall excede all extent of yeares, beseechinge you to accepte bothe my worke and prayer.

Concernyng my translation of this boke, it may please you to vnderstand that I haue rẽdred it so nere as I possibly might, to the very wordes of his text, and that in so plaine Englishe as I could expresse: Suche as it is, I beseche your grace to take it good parte.

Your graces humble

A. L.

The writinge of Ezechia kinge of Iuda, when he had bene sicke, and was recouered of his sicknes. I said in the cuttyng shorte of my daies, I shall go downe to the gates of the graue. I haue sought the residue of my yeares, I sayd I shall not see the Lorde, the Lorde in the land of the liuing. I shall not beholde man any more, nor those that dwell in the world. My life is withdrawen, and is chaunged like a shepeherdes lodge.

AS the name of God is immortall, and we oughte to trauaill that they which come after vs, do cal vpon it, and that it be honored and glorified in all times: So is it not enoughe, that during oure lyfe, we endeuor oure selues to honor God: but as I haue said before, our care should extende it selfe to the time to come, to the end we may haue in store some continuyng seede of religion, in suche sort as the trueth of God may neuer be abolished. But speacilly they whom God hath ordeined in anye estate to guide other, ought therfore so much the more to applie them selues vnto it. As also we se that S. Peter declaryng his ende to be nere, and that he should depart out of this worlde: addeth 2. Pet. 5.

that soinuch as he possibly may, he woulde make the doctrine whiche he preached, to remayne alwayes in force and memory, that mē might take profit after his death. Wchold now wherfore Ezechias was not cōtented to make this protestation whiche we reade here, with his mouth, but wold also wryte it, that to the ende of the worlde men might knowe how he had ben vexed in hys affliction, and that the same myght serue for doctrine to all the worlde: so as at this day we may take profyt thereof.

He saythe expressely that this wrytinge was made after he was recouered. For oftentimes when we ar touched eyther with sickness or anye other rod of God, we make protestations enow, but we do nothing els but shake our eares (as the prouerbe is) when we ar escaped, & we by and by forget al those thinges which we made a shew as if we knewe. But here it is shewed vs that the kinge Ezechias beinge recouered, forgat not the correction whiche he had receiued at the hand of god, nether the anguishes which he felt, but minded to make a memoriall of the whole, that those which come after might be enstructed therby.

But it appereth at the first shew that this writing serueth not for any instruction of them that shold rede it, but shold rather be an offēse. For we see the outragious passions of a man as it were rauished in minde which so abhorreth death, that he thought all to be lost when god shold take him out of the worlde, and in this we see nothing but the sinne of infidelitie. He tormenteth and rageth with him self (as it semeth) with a rebelling, vn-

com-

comely for a seruãt of god: to be short it appeareth that we can gather nothing of this song, but ẏ al the faithe whiche Ezechias had was only in hys prosperitie and quiet, & also that he gaue the bridle to much vnto him selfe in his heauinesse, in so muche that he complayned of god. as we see that he compared him to a Lyon. But whẽ all shal be wel cõsidered, we shal see that there is no instruction better or more profitable for vs than this. For when we shal haue well examined al that is in vs, then we shall know we that the same is also proper vnto our selues.

But first let vs note how the good king Ezechias did not here set fourthe his owne vertues to be praised of the world, for he might haue kept in silẽce that which he hath declared of his owne frawardnesse, & in place therof he nought haue spoken of hys request made to God, and the constance of his faythe: So then he sayth not that he was of valiant courage, that he ouercame al tentations without any stoppe or strife, he sayth not that he had a faith so stedfaste that it nothing troubled him to be corrected of ẏ hand of god: nothing of al thys. what then? we see a poore man tormẽted euen to the extremitye, and so striken downe, that he wiste not what myghte become of hym. We se a mã astonished with feare of the wrath of God, lokyng on nothyng but his owne affliction. Then seyng Ezechias doeth discouer him selfe, and sticketh not to confesse his owne faultes, in this we perceiue that he was not led of ambitiõ, nether of any vaine glory to be praised of mẽ, or to get reputatiõ, but he rather was willing him self to be cõfounded to shame, ẏ god might be glorified.

What is then his purpose? It is in one parte to make vs know howe he had bene afflicted then, when he thought that God was against him: and moreouer that therin men might know somuche the more howe great the goodnes of God was, when he receiued him to mercy, and would not forsake him in necessitie.

We haue then to beholde here, as in a loking glasse, our owne wekenes, to the ende that euery man may prepare himselfe against the time when his faith shalbe proued as the fayth of Ezechias was, and when God shall shew vs some tokens of his wrath, so as if then we seme in maner destroyed, yet we cease not therfore to truste that God will geue to vs an end of our troubles, as he did to this good king. Next to this, that we may learne to geue al praise of our saftie to the mercy of God, knowledging that so sone as he forsaketh vs, we are vtterly vndone, and that then we become more then miserable.

And nowe we see howe, and wherfore the good king Ezechias was thus tourmented, that is, because he sawe death so nere at hande. It semeth at the first face, that suche passion deserueth not a faithful mā. Trew it is that of nature death is dreadfull to vs al. For there is no man but (as they saye) desireth to be, and in death we thinke that we perishe, ỹ we be broughte to nought, and cease to be. Thus of nature we flie frō & abhorre death. and therfore also S. Paule saith in the v. chapter of the seconde epistle to the Corinthians. 2. Cor. 5 that we do not desire to be vnclothed of this body for it is impossible for man to desire to change his

estate

estate, I meane as concernynge thys lyfe. And those that do kyll them selues haue no natural affection, but the Deuil so carrieth them away that they are altogether blinded. And suche are to be rekened as vnnaturall monsters, in whom al the order of nature is changed. To be short it is most assured that death shalbe alwaye to vs terrible, and not onely because we are enclined to desire to to lyue, but also for so muche as God hath lefte a certeine marke, in suche sorte that the Heathen thẽ selues & the vnfaithfull are constrained to feele that death is a curse of God, which was pronũced vpon Adam, and al his linage. For asmuch then, as death is come vpon the world by sinne, & that it is a witnes of the wrath of God, that by it we are as it were cast of from him, banished from his kingdome (which is the kingdome of life) it must nedes be, although we haue no light of faith neyther euer had any one word of doctrine, that this be imprinted in our mindes, that it is naturallye vnpleasant vnto vs. Behold then by what meanes we are brought to flie death, & to withdraw we our selues from it so muche as we possibly maye. First bicause we are desirous to be: secondly for that we conceyue death to be a certeine signe of Gods wrath: yea althoughe we harde thereof no certaine instruction, yet God hath printed a certaine naturall instinction and feling therof within oure hertes. Yet notwithstandynge it is also trew that the faithfull do ouercome those feares, and do prepare them selues to die when it pleaseth God, but not (as the place speaketh whiche we haue alledged out of S. Paule) in suche sorte that

thei simply & without other cõsideratiõ desire to die, for ỹ wer ỹ doing of mẽ in desperatiõ, but thei prepare thẽ selues, forasmuch as thei know, ỹ after they haue bene vnclothed they shalbe clothed againe, ỹ this body which is but a ruinous lodging, is nothing but rottẽnes, & ỹ they shalbe restored to ỹ kingdõ of god. For asmuch as thẽ we behold this hope ỹ is geuẽ vs, thus we ouercome the feares of deth. Beside this on ỹ other side, we know ỹ our lord Iesus Christ hath repared this desolatiõ & ruine ỹ fel vpõ vs by ỹ sinne of our father Adã. Sobycause we take hold of life in the middest of deth, ỹ maketh vs ỹ we are not afraid to withdraw our selues hẽce whẽ god calleth vs to him, for we know ỹ death is but a passage to life. moreouer we know what is our true being: It is not to dwel in this world, for this is but a thorow fare, & we must alwai haue in remẽbrãce, ỹ which is spokẽ ỹ god placeth men here onely to mãnage thẽ, & to make thẽ to fetch their cõpasses (as thei say) & lodenly to turne againe. Thẽ whẽ we are taught ỹ our life is nothing els but a course, & the the world is but a shadow, which passeth & vanisheth awai: we know ỹ our true beyng, & our permanẽt estate is in heuẽ, & not here by low. Thus se we how we ought not to flie deth: but (ỹ more is) we haue occasiõ to desire it, bicause on the one side we ar fraile, & being holden vnder the bondage of sin, we se so many corruptiõs in our selues ỹ it is wofull, & when we desire to serue God we draw vp our legs, & whẽ we lift vp one fote thinking to set forward one step, we slip backward, & oft it cõmeth to passe ỹ we stũble or fall. Se now how iust a cause we haue to lamẽt our life, not in way of despeir, but bicause we ought to hate & ab

hoꝛre sin, We ought also todesire god to dꝛaw vs out of this so miserable captiuitie wherin we ar, as S. Paul sheweth vs exãple. He cõfesseth him selfe to be vnhappy, bicause he dwelleth in his bodi as a pꝛison. He asketh howe he shalbe deliuered. On the other side, we know ꝑ we ought to desire death ꝑ moꝛe ꝑ we might come nere to our God. Foꝛ (as it is saide in this place ꝑ we haue alledged) while we liue by faith we are as it were absent frõ God. Thẽ, where is our felicitie & perfect ioye: but in this ꝑ we cleaue to oure God in perfectiõ. Faꝛ asmuch thẽ, as by death we come nere to him, it is a thing to vs happy, and whiche ought to make vs ioyfull. And therfoꝛe he saieth in the first chap. to the Philip. that as touchinge him selfe, it should be moꝛe auauãtage to him to die then to liue, & although his life was pꝛofitable to the church, yet in hauing no other regard, but to his owen person, he was desirous to be dꝛawẽ away frõ this place by low: mark thẽ what ought to be ꝑ affectiõ of ꝑ faithful. Now let vs come to king Ezechias. It semeth ꝑ he had lost al maner tast of ꝑ goodnes of God, ꝑ he knew nothing of ꝑ resurrectiõ, ꝑ he was ignoꝛãt ꝑ he shold be restored by meane of ꝑ redeuer, he conceiued nothing but the wꝛath & curse of God: wher is his faith: where is his obeidiẽce: wher is this cõsolatiõ of the holy Gost, & this ioy inestimable, whiche we ought to receiue whẽ God certifieth vs of ꝑ loue which he beareth vs: In dede if he had had this persuasiõ deply roted in hĩ, ꝑ he was one of ꝑ childꝛẽ of god: doth not ꝑ adoptiõ bꝛig ꝑ iheritãce: to what end hath god chosẽ vs foꝛ his childꝛẽ, but ꝑ we shold be partakers of ꝑ heuẽly life wherunto he guideth vs: but we se none of al this in Exe.

Rom. 7.

2. Cor. 5.

Philip. 1.

It semeth thē that he was altogether distraught from sense and reason, that he hath forgottē God: that all the good doctrine that euer he heard before is vtterly blotted oute, and that he thinketh no more of it. These thinges at the firste shew, seme very straunge. Trew it is that at that time he had no suche reuelation of the heauenly life, as we haue at this day by the gospel. But yet Ezechias and all the other holy kinges and Prophetes, and all the rest of the faithfull dyd well conceiue that God had not chosen them in vaine. For though this sētēce of our lord Jesus Christ was not pronouced, yet was it engraued in the herts of all the faithfull that God is not the God of the dead. All they then that are cōprised in the number of his people haue bene assured to haue an abidyng life, and that shall endure for euer. And on the other side it is said that God calleth him selfe the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob long after their death. It must nedes be thē that they then lyued. So therefore the faithfull haue this assuraūce that God did not nourishe them in this world as brute beastes, but he gaue them a certeine taste of hys goodnes, vntyll suche time as they myghte haue full enioyinge thereof after their death. Euen Balaam himselfe whiche neuer knew any thing of the lawe, yet he failed not to say: I wishe my soule to dye the death of the righteous, and my end to be such as theirs shalbe. He desireth to ioyne him selfe with the race of Abraham, and yet he was a wicked & refused man And who maketh him to speake thus? euē this, that he is there as vpon the racke, & God wringeth

Math.22

Num.23

geth out of him this confession. Now if Balaam which was possessed of the Deuill, and gaue oute his tonge to hyre, to curse the people of God, hath bene constreined to say thus, what shall we thinke of them that had trewlye profyted in the lawe of God? But howsoeuer it be, trew it is that thoid fathers had not so cleare and manifest knowledge of the heauenlye life as we haue at this daye in the Gospell, and in dede the same was reserued vntill the comming of our Lorde Jesus Christ. And with good reason: for we haue a good gage of our life in our sauiour Jesus Christ, in that he is risen againe, and that it was not for him selfe alone but for all his body. This is the full assuraunce that God hath geuen in the parson of our Lorde Jesus Christ, that we passe through this world to come to the life that lasteth euer. The auncient fathers came not to suche degree, they were not so auaunced. But howsoeuer it were it is so that the tast which they had of the heauēlye life so sufficed them, that they rendred themselues peaceably to God. And we reade not that they were greatly tourmented in their death, as when Abraham departed, he made not lamentations, wayling and complaintes, as the king Ezechias did: but he was fylled and satisfyed with lyfe, saieth the scripture. In like maner was it of Isaac and Jacob, who rendring the laste groane saith: I wyll put my truste in thy saluation, my God. Thoughe Jesus Christ had not yet appered vnto the world, yet Jacob had in him selfe a stedfast and vndoubted hope, and made him selfe as sure of his saluation, as if he held it in his hād. Ge

Gene. 25. 35. 49.

So then we seelthat the holy fathers were not in doubt or suche mistrust, that they did not alwaye aspire vnto the heauēly life, but that it was their chiefe desire to atteine thereunto.

Now let vs retourne to the king Ezechias. We must conclude that he had some speciall reason in him selfe, why he so complayned of death, which we shall better see in the person of Dauid. *Psalm.6.* Dauid is sometimes in suche anguyshes that he *Psalm.30.* crieth, alas my God, who is he that shal acknowledge thee in death? And when I shalbe a poore rotten carion, what profite shalt thou haue? whē thou shalt haue brought me into ashes, what is it *2.Reg.2* that thou shalt haue gained? He made there hys *2.Par. 29.* cōplaints, neuertheles in the end he dyed peasceably. For no man saw that he was so passioned in his departyng, but that he rendred him selfe mildly into the handes of God. Howe came it then to passe that he wrote thus? It is bicause he cōceiued the wrath of God, whether it were in sickenes, or in any other affliction, and that is almuch as if the very hels were presently set before him. The affliction then that he conceyued, was not of symple death, but ẏ God gaue him some signe that he punished him bicause of his sinnes. Now seyng ẏ we se this same disputatiō in the parson of Dauid, it shalbe easy for vs to cōclud touching the king Ezechias ẏ he was also greuously vexed in his death, but that was not for that he was loth to depart out of this worlde, neither that he was tourmented as the poore Infidels whiche aspire not to a better life, which are also as it were drowned in theyr delites, and bringe them selues on sleye in such sort that they set not hynge by the hea-

heauenly like. We see that Ezechias was not so stricken downe, and yet he thought that God was against him, as we shall se yet more largely. And in dede it was not without cause that the Prophet Esay was sente vnto him, for he was as a Heraulde of armes, to make him defiaunce, and to declare vnto him: Beholde God is thine enemy: thou muste sustaine his extreme rigour, for thou hast offended him. When Ezechias heard that, he had no regard to ỹ simple death, by the which he muste of necessitie passe, but he hathe an other ende of consideration, ỹ he should be cut of from the worlde as an accursed creature, as one vnworthy, whō the earth should beare. And when God stroke him, that gaue a tokē to him that the land should be made desolate, for he knewe what should be the estate of the people: he sawe that all should be destroyed after his death, yt God dyd not remedi it by miracles. And he thought thus: My death shall not be onely to sende me into the throte of hell, but it shall be to bringe a generall ouerflowyng ouer all, so that in all the land there shalbe nothing but desolation. Shall the seruice of God then be throwen dowen, and shall al this be cast vpon my neck bicause I haue offended my God? Alas, and what shall this be? Let vs not nowe thinke it straunge if Ezechias speake thus as we heare, but let vs hold this alway that it is not the simple death whiche dyd affraye him so. What then? the wrath of God, when he beholde his sinnes, and that God toke away from him all fauor of his goodnes, & turned his back vnto him as if he had sene him armed against him, & lifted vp his arme, as if he would bring him to nought.

When

When Ezechias sawe that, he was so consolided that his mouth was stopped, & not without cause.

Nowe this is right worthy to be noted, for there are many blockish persons (and the moost part) which feare death, but it is not because they fele the curse of God appeare to them. It is true as we haue saide before, that God leaueth alway this point in the conscience of man, but they haue not all alike consideration therof. Wherfore is it then that death is dreadfull vnto them? bycause euery one will say, I desire to be. Truely when they speake in this maner it is as much as if they said I would be a calfe, or an asse, or a dogge, for the beyng of brute beastes is in this world, & the beynge of men where is it, but in this that they are ioyned to theyr God? But nowe we are as it were in prison, for in steade that this world shold haue bene vnto vs as an earthlye paradise (if we had continued in the obeidience of God) nowe we are as in a straunge countrey, wherein we be as lockt vp and banished. It is trew that yet we se many times some, yea many trackes of the goodnes of God, but how so euer it be, yet we do but languish here. But there are but few that know this. So much ꝯ more thē ought we to note wel this doctrine, which I haue here before touched, that is to wit, that both in death, and in all other afflictions we are more accombred and troubled with the wrath of God than with the euyll that we can fele. If one be afflicted with pouertie, so that he hath hunger and thirst, an other be stricken with sicknes and suffer great tourmentes,

an

another be persecuted of men so as he hathe no time of rest, and more if in the end death come before oure eyes, we oughte to knowe that there is nothing so muche to be feared as the wrathe and vengeaunce of God. But men do cleane contrary. And this marke, why I haue sayde that we must note this doctrine the better: because a man may se that the pore sicke persones, and they that are afflicted, in what sort soeuer it be, wyll crye Alas, one wyll cry the armes, another wyll crye the legges, the one here, the other there: but yet they come neuer to the grounde of the euill. And that procedeth of the lepresie that is in vs. For we are so dull witted that we can not atteine to knowe the iudgemēt of God. So much the more ought we to lerne whē we shalbe beatē with such roddes as I haue sayd to make vs loke vpon the cause whence this euill procedeth: which is, that God will haue vs to fele our sinnes, and that he sommoneth vs to the ende that we shoulde there come as it were before oure iudge, and that we should not come there with sleyghtes and meanes of excuse, but with franke and free confession, and that the same be not only made wyth mouth, or assent by writyng, but that we be woñded euē to the bottome of the herte, felynge what it is to haue done agaynst the will of oure God, to haue styrred him vp against vs, & to haue made warre against his iustice. This is it that we haue to holde in minde when we see that the kyng Ezechias was in such extremitie of anguish, bycause God dyd punishe him for his sinnes.

Yea and this we ought to marke well, that though

though before he haue protested that he had walked in puritie and vprightnesse of lyfe, and that he had studied all his lyfe long to obey and please God, neuertheleſſe he reſteth not his mind vpon his vertues, nor his owne merites, he entreth not into plea with God, for he ſeeth well that all that coulde nothynge profite him nor bringe hym any releſe. Therfore he ſetteth not fourthe what his lyfe hathe ben, but he knowlegeth that rightfullye he is afflicted.

So then we learne, when it ſhall pleaſe God to correcte with his roddes, not to grudge at it, as if he did vs wronge, as if he had no regarde to oure merites, or as yf he vſed greater ſharpnes with vs than we had deſerued. Let al ſuch blaſphemies be beaten down, and let vs confeſſe that he hath iuſt cauſe to puniſhe vs, yea not only to expulſe vs out of the worlde, but alſo to thrawe vs downe into the gulfe of hell. See then howe we deſerue to bee ordred yf, wee looke vpon all our owne lyfe.

Moreouer let vs not thynke it ſtraunge that god ſendeth vs afflictions whiche ſeme greuous and ſharpe vnto vs, ſeing wee ſee that Ezechias hathe walked before vs to ſhewe vs the waye. When when they haue had any good affectiō and deſyre to ſerue god, do muche maruell yf god puniſhe them more then the wicked, and they ſuppoſe that they haue loſt theyr labour. This tentacion is to cōmō, as we ſee, that euē Dauid was alſo tormented with it when he ſaith: what meaneth this? for I ſee the deſpiſers of God proſper and be in iolitie, and make theyr triumphes, and in the meane time I do nothinge but ſup vp the

Pſalm. 73.

drynke

drynke of sorrow, frō the euening to the morrow I haue no reste. It seemeth then that it is tyme lost to serue God: Beholde how at the extremitie he is beatē down, yf God by his wonderfull vertue had not vpholden him. And because the lyke maye come vnto vs, let vs make vs a buckler of the example that is here set before vs of the kinge Ezechias: for wee haue seen here before howe he had framed all hys lyfe to the law of God: he had a zele which is not to be founde in manye people, to purge al hys land of all superstitions and ydolatries: many alarumes were stirred vp agaynst hym, to make him somwhat to reuolte: but that nothyng stayed hym but that he set vp the trewe and pure religyon, & in his priuate lyfe he sought nothing but that god might be glorifyed in, and thyough all: and yet loke how God cōmeth to assayle him: yea, and that of a straunge fashion, for he is as a lyon that breaketh his bones: So whē we see that Ezechias, is thus handled, ought not we to learne to beare pacientlye the corrections that God shall sende vs. Loe this is it that wee haue to conceiue of this place.

Now to the rest of the passions that Ezechias endureth, and although he slipt here of the henges yet stil in the middest therof he declareth the loue that he had to God, and that he desyred not thys present life after the maner of them that artherein become brutish, and whiche seke for nothynge but to eate and drynke, and know not for what ende they are created, but onlye to passtime here for a whyle. But Ezechias sheweth well that hee was guyded by an other spirite. He sayethe

I haue

I haue sayd in the cutting short of my dayes. I shall go down to the gates of the graue, I shall not se anye more the Lorde: euen the Lorde. He speaketh here of his lyfe, that it shalbe cut of in the mid des of his course: But yet he sheweth that he desireth not here to liue to be at his ease. He was a kinge, and might haue fared well, he moughte haue had greate store of delicates, and pleasures in this worlde, shortly he myghte haue made him selfe dronk with al sortes of thinges of delite. He mourneth not for want of all these: but he saieth, that he shall no more see the Lorde, and he is not contented to haue pronounced this word once, but he repeteth it againe to expresse a greater vehemencie: The Lord, euen the Lord, saith he: By this he sheweth that he desireth not so much his life, as to exercise him selfe here beneth to knowe that God was his father, and to confirme him selfe more and more in that faith.

Let vs then marke well wherunto oure lyfe is to be directed, that is, that we should perceiue that God already in part sheweth him selfe a father toward vs. I graunt it trewe (as I haue already said) that we ar absent from him, for our saluation lieth in faithe and hope, it is hydden and we see it not with naturall sense. Yet in the meane while God faileth not to sēd down certein beames hither by lowe to lighten vs so, as we be guided to the hope of the life euerlasting and perceiue that God is not so farre estraunged frō vs, but that yet he stretcheth fourth his hand hether by lowe to haue care of vs, and to shewe vs by

experience

experience that he hath vs in his safekeping. For when the sunne riseth in the morninge, se we not what a fatherly care God hath for vs? After whē it goeth downe at euenyng, see we not that God hath an eye to our wekenes, that we maye haue rest, and be somewhat releued? Doth not God then in so hydyng the sunne in the nyghte tyme, shew him selfe our father? Further, when we se the earth bring forth her frutes for our nourishement: when we se the raynes and all the chaunges, and alterations that are in nature: in all this perceiue we not that God hath his hād stretched out to draw vs alway vnto him, and howe he already sheweth him self a liberall father vnto vs, and that we enioy the temporall benefites which he doth for vs, to the ende that by this meane we may be drawen vp hyer, that is to say, to knowe that he hath adopted and made vs his chyldren, that we may come to the fulnes of ioye and of all felicitie, when we shalbe fully ioyned with hym? Beholde nowe wherunto we ought to applie all our life, if we wyll not that the same be accursed, and that as many yeares, monthes, dayes, houres, and minutes as we haue lyued here by low, all the same be put together in accompte, for euer to encrese, and enflame the vengeance of God vpon vs. And therfore let vs know that we ought here to study vpon the workes of God. For euen therfore also are we set in this worlde, and therefore in the v. chapter, when the Prophete mynded to rebuke the Iewes of a certeine vile brutishnes. They haue not (saieth he) beholden the workes of God. He speaketh of theyr dronkennesse, of theyr gluttony, and of theyr dissolute li- *Esay. 5.*

nes, but the lumpe that maketh vp the heape of euell is this, that they haue not beholden the worke of God. So nowe the good kyng Ezechias sheweth vs, that it were better for vs all to haue died before we had bene borne, and that the earth should haue gaped whan we came out of our mothers wombe, to swallowe vs, thā to liue here by lowe, if it were not for thys, that we do here alreadie see oure God: not that we haue a perfecte sighte. But first he sheweth himselfe vnto vs by his worde, which is the trew lokyng glasse. And next, we haue aboue and beneath so manye signes of his presence, and of the fatherly care whiche he hath for vs, that if we be not to much dulwitted, and altogether vnfornished of vnderstandynge and reason, we must nedes see hym. For all the world is as a liuely image, wherein God setteth fourth vnto vs his vertue and highnes.

Moreouer, this that we are gouerned vnder his hand, is a more familiar witnes of his iustice, of his grace and of his mercy. Let vs then learne to lyue to this ende, to practise our selues to worshipp God as him that hath created and fashioned vs. Next, that we ware to him honor and reuerence as to our father, and that in the tastinge of good things (which he nowe dealeth among vs) We maye be confyrmed in the fayth of the heauenly lyfe. And further, for asmuch as he vouchsafeth to extende his prouidence euen hyther by lowe, for this entent to gouerne vs in this transitory and fraile life, that we doubt not, when we shal come vnto him, that then we shal wholde face to face that, whiche we nowe see darkely and in a small

a small portion.

And so the kynge Ezechias remitteth all to God, as if he shold say: Alas it is true that I am here, as to beholde clearly the graces of God. But nowe I see that all this is as it were plucked from me: For it semeth that God is mynded to spoile me of all that he hath geuen me before: and nowe there resteth no more for me but to despayre, for as muche as he hathe geuen ouer and forsaken me. He hath sent his prophete with this message, that I am vndone. Alas, and when I perceiue no more signe of the goodnes of my god, neyther that he extendeth this strength to comfort me in my afflictions: no not when I am in the anguishes of death: Lo is not this a wofull thing that our Lorde hath forsaken me there, and that I am cut of from him? Nowe of this we haue to gather, that be it in life, be it in death, this grace onely shoulde alwaye suffice vs: that is to say, that God geueth vs the feelynge of his goodnes. And whē he sheweth vs that he is fauourable vnto vs, let vs go on boldely, and if we lāguish in this life, let vs leaue it patiently. Trewe it is that we may weill grone & sigh that we are captiues, in this prison of sin: & beid we ꝑ may also bewaile seing these afflictions ꝑ God doth send thē vpon vs. And yet oughte we not to cease alwayes to bleſſe the name of God, and to reioyse in the myddest of all our sorowes. When we shall fele that he wyll be oure father, and that he wyll knowe vs for his children, in death we shall beholde euerlastyng lyfe, whiche shall make vs forget all lamentations, so as we shall no more say: Alas what shall I do?

Howe shall I behaue my selfe? Whither shal I go? We shal cut of all these thinges, and we shall saye no more: Shall I drinke no more? shall I eate no more? For such is the maner of brut beastes. But now I se that my God draweth neare vnto me, I go nowe to throwe my selfe downe before him, I go to yeld my self into his handes, and to ioyne my self with him, as with mine owne father. When (I say) we shall shalbe thus disposed, we may say with Dauid. Lord I commende my spirite vnto thee. Dauid sayd this during his life, but our Lord Iesus Christ sheweth vs that we must so say when God draweth vs out of this world. And last of all, when we thinke vpon all the benefites of god, let vs learne to glorifie him, as these be thynges inseparable. Accordynge then as God maketh vs partakers of his graces & that already in part he shewethvs ý al our felicitie is to be of the cõpany of his children, soought euery one of vs to endeuor to honor him as oure father. This was the cause why Ionas beynge drawen out of the whales throte, saieth: I shall blesse my God. He saith not, I shall lyue to eate and drinke: But I shall come to the temple the sanctuarie of my God, & there I wyll geue him prayse for thys redemption, that is to wytte, for that he hath plucked me back from the deth. We holde now what it is that we haue to do.

Psalm. 31. *Luke.* 23. *Ionas.* 2.

Nowe concernynge that whiche Ezechias speaketh of the cuttynge shorte of his dayes, he speaketh as hauing respect to the naturall course of mans life wherof is made mention in the song of Moyses., for he began to reigne at the age of xxv. yeares, In the xiiii. yere of his raigne, Hie-

Psalm. 90

rusalem

rusalem was beseged, and then he fell into thys sickness, as we se. Thus was he xxxix. yeres old. Nowe he saieth that his life is cut short, bicause he is not come to old age. Trew it is ỹ Moyses speaketh of the frailtie of men, and saith: What are men? After that God hathe let them walcke here their dayes, then they are gone againe. And in dede when man commeth to lx. yeares, he is al decaied, and if ye adde x. yeares more, there is nothing but lothsomnes and werines, he is nothing but a burden vnprofitable, and life it selfe is combersom vnto him. He sheweth thē that this lifbeyng short and fraile, ought not to holde vs. But howsoeuer it were, this kyng Ezechias was as in the flowre of hys age, he was not yet come to the age of xl. yeares. And in this respect he saith that God hath cut shorte his dayes, not that we haue any tyme determined. For do not children die sometimes before they come into this world, and so sone as they be come, doth not death already besege thē? But he was not yet come to that old age, which is accordingto the ordinary course of mans life. Ezechias than beholdeth this: and aboue all thinges hath his eies fastened vpō this message of the Prophet Esay, that is, that God hath punished him bicause of his sinnes. And it is almuch as if he should say talking to him selfe. I see well that God wyll not leaue thee in thys world, for the assault is very violēt. And whereof commeth that, but of thy offences and sinnes: as we shall see that he addeth afterwarde. It is true that he attributeth al vnto God as vnto his iudge, but he toke the faulte vpon his owne parson, confessyng him selfe onely to be culpable. Loe

howe

howe he vnderstandeth that his dayes were cut short.

When he saith *that he shall come to the gates of the graue, that he shall se no more the lyuing:*

That was bicause he shoulde be conuersant no more amonge men, to exercise him selfe in the seruice of God. But nowe this is not without cause that in it also he conceyued the wrathe of God. Althoughe he were subiecte to dwell as it were confusely myngled amonge manye rascalles, as in dede there were many Hypocrits in Iuda, and many wicked and dissolute persons mockers of God, and of his law. And among the Heathen there was nothing els but vngodlines, and rebellion. Now when Ezechias sawe that, I knowe nowe (sayeth he) that I am vnworthye to dwell vpon the earth, because these tarry styll in the worlde, and God hath cut me of, yea with a strong hand, as if he would come armed to make open warre against me as my enemye.

Then when Ezechias had suche imaginations, it is not to be marueyled thoughe he made suche complaintes. But howsoeuer it were, all commeth to this end that God did persecute him. This same was to him a burden so heauy that he as it were foltred vnder it. So muche the better oughte we to note thys doctrine, that if God at any tyme shall afflict vs, more hardelye than we wouldethat he should, we shoulde not cease for all that hcare to acknowledge that he loueth vs, and that this perswasion which we shall haue of

hys

his goodnes should make vs to ouercome al temptations which otherwyse myght ouerthrow vs.

Furthermore, if he reproue vs, and cause vs to feele our synnes: that we runne vnto hym, and take the condemnation vpon vs: For we shall gayne nothynge by all oure startynge hoales: yf we will pleade, of necessitie the case muste passe wyth hym. Then when we see that God is iuste in punishynge vs for oure synnes, let vs come wyth head bowed downe, that we maye be releued by hys mercye: and let vs haue no other confidence, nor truste of saluation, but in thys that it pleaseth him in the name of oure sauioure Jesus Christ, to receaue vs to mercye, for as muche as in vs there is nothyng but cursednes.

Nowe let vs throwe oure selues downe before the maiestie of our good God, in the acknowledgynge of oure synnes, beseechynge hym, that more and more, he will make vs to feele them, and that he will in suche sorte cleanse vs from all oure fylthynesse, that we beynge perfectly awaked from oure dull drowsinesse, maye grone and sobbe: not onelye for the miseryes that we see in the world throughe our synnes: but also bycause we cease not so muche as in vs lyeth, more and more to augement the same.

And yet alwaye lette vs runne to oure God, and although it semeth that he persecuteth vs, and that hys hande be verye roughe and dreadfull vnto vs, yet let vs not cease to approche vnto hym, and magnifie hys goodnesse: beynge assured that it shall very well surmount farre, and exceade all oure faultes and offences.

And though we fele no rigour in him, yet neuer-
theles let vs acknowledge that it is much better
for vs to draw home to his house, and vnder his
safegarde, than to runne away from hym
as wretched despering persons, & let
vs beseche him to geue, not on-
ly vnto vs this grace, but
also to all peoples.
&c.

sermon.

☞ *My lyfe is withdrawen, it is chaunged as a shepeherds lodge. I haue cut of my dayes as a weauer, he hathe oppressed me with sicknes. From mornyng vntill night thou shalt consume me. I made rekenyng to go vntill morning, but he hath brused my bones as a Lion. Thou shalt destroy me from morning to night, and shalt make an ende of me. I chattered like a Crane, and swalow, & mourned like a Doue, my eyes wer lift vp on high, and they failed me. Trouble oppresseth me, Lord refresch me. What shall I say, it is he that hath spoken it, and it is he also who hath done it.*

EZechias continuynge the matter whiche yesterdaye was entreated of, sayeth here that hys lyfe was chãged as a shepherdes lodge. By this similitude he sheweth that there is no reste in the life of man, which he had proued in him selfe, for as much as he was as it were at reste, & in one moment God toke him oute of this worlde. When we make a comparison of our bodies with our houses where we are lodged, it is likely that the bodye of man which is more than the house, shoulde haue some reste: For what is ỹ house, but a place for the bodye,

Math. 6. dye to resort vnto: For they are builded for the vse of men. He then whiche dwelleth in any buildynge, ought to be preferred to the house, as the bodye to the gowne, and other garmentes. But Ezechias saith here, that he dwelt in thys world as a shepeherd: who hath his litle cottage which he draweth and carieth hyther, and thether. He speaketh after the custome of that countrey, bycause men there kepe theyr foldes, and a shepeharde wyll cary hys lodgyng as easely as a man would cary any lyght thyng: he sheweth them in summe, that his life was none other thing then a wanderyng, and that God chaunged him by and by. He speaketh after the opinion whiche he had conceaued: for he was as it wer vpon the brinke of the pit. And in dede it was necessarye, that he should dispose him selfe to die seyng God had sent him suche a message as is saide. To be shorte he speaketh as if the thing wer already come. Now afterwarde he commeth to the cause of his sickenes, and confesseth that he is culpable. He saieth that he him selfe had cut of his daies: euen as a weauer hauyng a pece of clothe vpon his Loome should cut it all of. I may not then (sayeth Ezechias) accuse any parson: for this euyll oughte to be imputed to me onely: for I haue prouoked the wrath of God, and haue depriued my selfe of hys blessyng, therfore muste I nowe blame my selfe of all this.

Nowe thoughe he do speake here but of one man alone, yet we haue thereby a good admonition of the shortnesse of oure owne lyfe also. Trueth it is, that it is a thynge well ynoughe knowen

knowen vnto vs, and yet we do verye seldome thyncke of it. For although we do confesse thys present lyfe to be nothyng els but a shadowe: yet are we so wrapped therein that no man thinketh vpon any other thinge, but to make prouision for a hundreth yeres. And to be short, it semeth that we should neuer depart from this worlde, we are so occupied on things of the worlde. So much the more then ought we to call that to mynde which the scripture sheweth vs of the frailtie of our life, as S. Paule also saith that now we are lodged in a cabine: the body of a mā is not a house worthy to be called a goodly dwellyng, or buyldyng: for in it is nothing but trāsitory, wherfore let vs mourne wayting tyll we may be fully restored, and let vs not be tyed so to this worlde but that alwaies we may be goyng forward. For the vnfaithful how so euer it be, they shall come to theyr ende: but by no meanes come they neare vnto God, but rather they are settled in this worlde, and in the steade of goynge forewarde, they do drowne them selues more depelye in it. Let vs then learne to goe forwarde, that is to saye, let vs learne to be so dysposed to folowe God when he calleth vs, that death maye neuer come to vs before his time. 2. Corin. 5.

Touchyng this that Ezechias saieth, that he was cause of his owne euil, let vs also practise well this doctrine. So ofte, and when soeuer it shall please God to afflicte vs, we se that we are gyuen to murmurynges: and although it be so that wee bee founde gyltye of oure faultes

faultes, yet cease we not to vexe our selues, as yͤ God passed measure. So then, that we may confesse with a true humilitie that God doth punish vs iustly in all thafflictions which he sendeth vs, let vs saye after the maner of Ezechias: it is I that am cause of this euill.

It is true that by and by he attributeth that to God: but they both agre very wel, to wyt, that man be authour of al the miseries yͤ he endureth, and that God neuertheles worketh as a Iudge. For when an euil doer shalbe punished, he ought not to complaine of his Iudge: but rather for as muche as he seeth him selfe to haue offended the lawes he should condempne him selfe, and also he should know that God by thauctority of iustice brought him to that iust punishment, euẽ so must we do: that is to say, that fyrste we acknowledge that if God do afflicte vs, it is not bycause he taketh pleasure in tourmẽting vs: but that he must reward vs as we haue deserued, thoughe yet he hath not altogether regarde to our offences: For what a thinge shoulde that be? we shoulde be an hũdred thousand times ouerwhelmed if he wold vse rigour towardes vs: but accordynge to that, which he knoweth to be good for vs, he chasteneth vs, although we haue our mouth alwayes closed, and that no murmuryng escape thereout.

And nowe to the rest, whan we shall knowe that we haue prouoked his angre, let vs vnderstande that we may not go fourther than our selues, to say who is yͤ cause of this? but let vs simplie accuse our selues. Lo now in sũme what we haue to learne of this matter. Now it foloweth, *From the morninge to the nyghte, thou shalte*

bringe me to naught.

In which wordes Ezechias sheweth howe horrible the displeasure of God is, for he meaneth that god nede not deuise this policie, or that, whē he would be reuenged on mē: but if he speake the worde, the thinge shall forthwith be done. To be short he sheweth here what the power of God is, on the one side, and what the frailtie of man is on the other side. And that is to pull out of vs al the folish imaginations that we conceiue, in making our selues beleue that we may escape his handes. And we se howe men drawe backe alwaies: and although God handle them streighly, they think they may finde some way howe to flee from hym. To be shorte, we thrust out time with oure sholders (as the prouerbe is) and promise our selues, leysure enoughe, and thoughe the corde be straite, yet we conceiue still some vaine hope. And what is ꝑ cause therof: that we haue not respect to our frailtie: for there is no minut of tyme, when deth threateneth vs not: And if we are now standing vpright, at the turning of a hande, behold we are fallen. On the other side we are ignoraunt of the infinite power of God: For if he do but once laye his hande vpon vs, he nede not do it the seconde time, it shall suffice that he onely blow on vs, and loe, we shall be broughte to nothinge. It is not without a cause that Ezechias sayeth here, that *from morning tyll night, he shalbe brought to naught.*

For we heare also that we are not sustained, but in this that God geueth vs strength: but if he withdraw his spirite, it must nedes come to passe that we beyng troubled, must immediatly fayle. *Psal. 104.*

But

But if he shewe him selfe to be againste vs, and that he persecuteth vs, then must we be yet more striken downe.

Folowynge then the admonition of Ezechias, let vs after consider howe feble we are, and let vs acknowledge what we be of oure selues: To witte, that euery minute God sustaineth vs: but that death neuertheles besegeth vs, and that it neede not make any great assaute to ouerthrow vs: for one blast onely were ynoughe. And loe streight waies we shold be withered like grasse: as we shall se in the fourtie Chapter of Esay. Esay. 40.

Moreouer let vs acknowledge what the wrathe of God is when it is armed agaynst vs. For God is not lyke vnto creatures, so that he shoulde nede to arme him selfe, and to make great preparatiō, for so sone as he speketh the word, we shall fourthwyth be destroied by his only word. Seynge it is so then, let vs learne to walcke in carefulnesse, commyttynge oure lyues into hys handes, and let vs knowe that we are nothynge at all, but in so muche as we haue oure beynge in him: And so muche rest as it pleased hym to gene vs, let vs attribute it wholye to his grace, and so when he prolongeth our life: for we should be as men without strength, yf he would shewe but one onely droppe of his power agaynste vs.

Note then what we haue to marke vpon thys place, where he sayeth:

From mornynge vntyll nyght.

Now he addeth that *he chattered as a Crane or as a swallowe, and that he mourned like a Doue.*

Wherin

Wherin he meaneth that anguishe helde him in locked in suche sorte, that he had not so muche as a worde fre to expresse hys passyons. If a man crye and lament, and make hys complaintes, and declare hys euyll, it is then to be sayde that he is sore troubled: but when a man is so striken down that he can not declare what he ayleth, when he stammereth so in him selfe, that he can not drawe forth one onely worde to declare howe vehement hys passyon is: when he nowe sygheth, nowe bryngeth forth halfe a worde, and the rest kepte in, as if one had his throte locked vp: thys is a greate extremitie. Ezechias then sayeth that he was so. Now there is no doubt, but that he had hys respecte vnto God cheifely: As if he shoulde saye, that menne perceaued well ynoughe the heauynesse that he was in: But whan that he woulde frame anye request vnto God, he was as it were dombe, & that on the one syde the sicknesse troubled hym, and yet he coulde not plainely expresse what he ayled: so that he was in two extremities. The one, ꝑ he was in such sort locked vp within, ꝑ with great payne could he fetch out any cõplaint. The other ꝑ he was oppressed wt so vehement passyons, that he wyste no wheare to begynne to make his prayer. But thys maye be thoughte very straunge, that Ezechias who before had in him selfe so greate strength, shoulde now be so faint harted yea, as it were brought to naught: but that was because he had a spirituall conflict, kelynge his sinnes, and knowynge that God was his iudge: for (as we touched yesterday) this trouble surmounteth all the other.

It is very likely that Ezechias had an extreme paine, wherwith he was throughly strikē down: And also it may be coniectured that it was some burnyng pestilence. Beholde then that his paine was great in it selfe: but that was nothing in cōparison of the conceiuing of Gods wrath, whē he beheldē his sinnes, and knewe God to be armed against him as his aduersary, and that it was he that persecuted him. This was it that in suche sorte affraied him: And in dede, whan a man is brought to that point, all his courage and iolytie must of necessitie faile: for what is the constancie of a man to stande against the wrath of God? It must nedes be more then a frensie and mad rage, when a man wyll thinke to do so. It is true that a man may be constant to indure afflictions when God shall sende them: but howe so farre forth as he shall be strengthened of God. Agayne if men trouble or molest one, he will cōsider that he hath to do wt creatures: if he suffer any trouble, well, he biteth on the bridle: but whē God summoneth vs to appeare, and maketh vs to fele that we are giltie before him, and that presently we must render an accompt, that our sinnes threaten vs, and that in the meane time we perceiue eternal death to abide vs: there (as I haue saide) can we not thinke that we haue any strength to make oure partye good, except we were more then in a mad rage. Let vs not then think straunge if Ezechias be so stricken downe, for he hathe not to do wyth resistyng sorowe, neyther with withstandyng iniuries done vnto him on mens behalfe: neyther boyng down his sholders to endure any afflictiō, but he hath to fight agaynst God.

And

and howe could he perfourme that? than must he nedes be as a water that is powred out and spilt. See nowe what is the cause that he could frame no maner of complaint to expresse his griefe, and yet could he neuer kepe silence. Se also why Dauid sayde that sumtymes he helde his peace, and by and by after he set on crying and roring out, & yet felt no releasse. We se that the passiõs of Dauid were like to these of the good king Ezechias: as in deede he also addeth that his synnes troubled hym, and that he was affrayed of the wrath of God, he kept not then any certain rule or measure, but sumtyme he caste out sighes, he lyfte vp hym selfe, and anone after he was so caste dowue that he could not recouer his breath, and yet styll the payne continewed. And in an other place he saith ỹ he held his peace as if he had bene bridled, & had concluded in hym selfe to vtter not one word more: no (saith he) I wyll be as a dome creature, I wyll not speake, I wyll not bringe forthe one sillable: yet notwithstanding (saith he) I felt the griefe increase, and kindle more and more, euen as a fyre that is long kept very close, if it be opened then the strength encreaseth & sheweth greater force, and breaketh out in a flame, so Dauid protesteth that in his anguishe, when he had determined to kepe silence and to say neuer a word, euen then was he deceaued, and shewed all that was hyden in his harte, although it were not by wordes well ordred and placed. And to be short, they that knowe in deede what the wrathe of God is, wyll speake and crye, and yet they know not on whiche side to begin: and again when they holde their peace they wote not why they doe it:

Psal. 22.

Psal. 39.

but they ar alway in anguish. And we se a notable exãple of al these things in ỹ good king Ezechias.

It is trew that God doth not examine al mẽ a lyke with suche extremitie: for if he exercise vs it shalbe according to our weaknes: he seeth that we shall not be able to endure suche tormoiles and assualtes. He spareth vs thẽ: but whẽ it shall please him to prove vs in such sorte as we reade here in the example of kyng Ezechias: We muste then be armed with this doctrine. This it is then that we haue to beare away. Now to the rest: let vs lerne what is al the constantie of men. They may well shewe some token of valiantnes when God doth not shew forth his force against them, but so sone as he shall call vs to accompt, thẽ nedes must all that iustines whiche we thynke that we haue within vs, droupe and vanishe awaye. This is it that we must practise for our instruction to learne true humilitie, for we know that men do cõmonly rest in theyr owne presumption and trust in them selues. And what is the cause of that: but for that euery man hath an eye to his felow, and therefore think we our selues to be strõgly fournished. But we ought to lift vp our wit to God, for there shold we finde, that so sone as he setteth vpon vs we become as nothynge. Let vs then learne to knowe what it is to plonge our selues downe to the bottome in one minute, so sone as God maketh vs to fele his wrath: Let vs also learne that vntil we be spoiled of all cõfidence in our selues, we can not be set in ỹ array of right humilitie. For so long as mẽ haue any opiniõ of thẽselues, & think ỹ they cã do this or ỹ, it is certaine ỹ they robbe god of ỹ which belõgeth vnto him, & so whẽ they lift vp thẽselues without stay to rest vpõ, it is to breake theyr own neckes. This it is thẽ ỹ we haue to hold in meno-

ry, that all the imagination of mē when they trust in their own strengthes is nothing but a dreame, bicause they loke not vpō God, & do not there stay themselues, ẏ they might be spoiled of all vayne ouerwening of thē selues. Nowe when we heare speake of such a chattering, & that Ezechia cōfesseth ẏ he could not bring forth one word, but ẏ he stāmered, not wotting what to say: let vs knowe that whē our Lord shal presse vs in such sort that we ar not able to frame one requeste, or to haue one formall prayer, the gate yet shall not be locked against vs, but ẏ we maye haue accesse vnto him: Which I speak bicause this tentation is very dāgerous. It is true that if we perceiue not in oure selues a zele to pray vnto God, & also a disposition to way depely the promises whiche he geueth vs, to take boldnes to approche vnto him, ẏ ought to displease vs, & we oughte to thinke ẏ we are farre frō him on our behalfe: but yet we muste ouercome this tentatiō. Thē when a man shall fele himself in suche troble ẏ he can not bring forth one worde to pray to God, that he shalbe there throwē down & that he shal not know at what end to begin, yet muste he pray how so euer it be, & in what sort: at ẏ leaste, let vs chatter, ẏ is to say, let vs caste forth gro nes & sighes, which may shew some excessiue passiō, as if we wer euē there vpō ẏ racke. & God heareth euē those groninges: as also we se ẏ S. Paule saith, ẏ the holy goste moueth vs to vnspeakable gro nes, such as can not be expressed. Therefore if one would make an arte of Rethorick of ẏ praiers of ẏ faithful, it is a great abuse: for our lord hūbleth vs to this end, ẏ we shold not imagine to obteine any thing at his hāds by any fair talke: he had rather ẏ we were so confused, ẏ we had not only one word Rom. 8.

a right in oure prayers, but that nowe we shoulde cast out puffynges, and blowinges, and anon that we should abide styll with silence: alas my God, alas what shal I do: and when we shall mourne so, that we should be so wrapped in, and tangled, that there should neither be begynnynge nor ending. Thē when we shalbe brought to that point, our lord knoweth this kind of lāguage, although we vnderstande it not, and although our perplexities hinder vs, that we can not bringe forthe one perfect sentence, so that men also vnderstande not what we would say: yet God (as we haue said before) wyll heare vs wel ynoughe. Se then what we haue to learne at this time: that if troubles oppresse vs, so that Sathan by meanes therof go about to exclud vs that we shold not pray to God, but ỹ we should be as it were afraied of hym, yet let vs not cease to presēt vnto god these gronings, although they be cōfuse. Now Ezech. after saith: *That he made rekening vntill euening, & that God brake all his bones, as yf he were in the throte, and betwene the clawes of a Lyon.*

In saying that he made reckening vntil night, he meaneth that he cast his accōpt, well then I will se what will happen betwene this and nyght: but (saith he) the cuill encreased: for I knew not yet sufficiently the terrible & dredfull mighte of God, when he setteth him selfe agaynst a poore creature. Now then we haue yet to lerne, that by the word of God, we haue bene taughte what is his force, and that we haue also fealte it by experience, although we conceaue therof but a portion onely. For God shall exalt him selfe in suche sorte, as we shall perceiue that all that we thoughte of hym

before was but a final shadow. So thē let vs lerne to cōsider what is ỹ power of God, & therunto to applie al our wit & studies, & to be desirously minded to walke in his feare, & to dread his maiestye, knowing ỹ he doth let vs fele but a final tast of his strength. For if he would lay hard to our charge, we should finde ỹ whiche we before thought was as a farre of, & as it were in a dreame. This was it that the good kyng Ezechias ment to expresse, that we should learne by his exāple not to reckon without our hoste, but ỹ we should know ỹ marueilous are the iudgementes of God, & the corrections which he sendeth to punish the sins of men, and ỹ then we should thinke that we haue not yet cōprehēded all, for our capacitie is to sclēder. But that we are guided vnto it a farre of, ỹ is to saye, that if so be, ỹ when God doth chastise and correct vs, we be forthwith taken with feare, & thoughe we be dull witted, yet he maketh vs to fele what and how mighty is his maiestie, we may imagine that it is a hundred thousand times more thā our spirites can conceaue, and that therby we may be al way so muche the more stirred vp to feare him.

Now as to the similitud of the Lyon, it semeth that Ezechias doth here a wrong to God, for this is not to speake of him with suche reuerence as he deserueth to compare hym to a cruell beast, ỹ deuoureth, bruseth, destroieth, teareth & breaketh al. *Esay. 103.* And we know ỹ the scripture preacheth vnto vs of God, cleane cōtrary thereunto, ỹ is to say, that he is kind, pitiful, pacient, ful of mercy, ful of equitie & mildnes: briefly that he beareth such loue to men, ỹ he desireth nothing but to handle thē deintely as his owne childzen. Seyng thē it is so that

God declareth himselfe to be suche a one, it semeth that Ezechias speaketh blasphemy in comparing him to a lion: But the good kinge meant not here to protest against God: but onely he hath declared his passions, & he did it not to preache hys owen praises, as we haue alreadye sene, but he had rather to receaue this shame, euē to ẏ ende of the worlde, ẏ men might knowe what his frailtie was, & that we should haue such instruction thereby as might profit vs. And thus Ezechias hath not spared himself, but hath set himselfe out vnto vs for an exāple ẏ we might se how he was takē with feare & therby learne our selues to feare God, & also to arme vs wᵗ his promises whē we shal come in such troubles, to thend ẏ we may cōtinew to cal vpon him: & though we faile in al this, & become altogether cōfused, yet let vs still hold this point to offer our selues to god, to sēd forth vnto him our sighes & groninges. And this is it ẏ we haue hereby to learne. Now is it not wout cause ẏ Ezechias cōpareth God to a liō, for (as we haue sene before) al the peines ẏ we shal fele in our bodies, & al ẏ greues ẏ we may cōceiue are nothing in cōparison of this cōceiuing of the wrath of god, & this is ẏ cause ẏ we say ẏ the spirituall battailes are much more hard thā al other tētations ẏ we can haue. We cal spiritual battails, whē god cōpelleth vs to cast an eye vnto our sinnes, & on the other sid so awaketh vs ẏ he maketh vs haue in mynd what his wrath is, & to cōceiue ẏ he is our iudg, & ẏ we be sūmoned to appere before him, to render accōpte. This is a battel which we cal spiritual, which is much more heauy, & much more terrible thē all the sorrowes, anguishes, feares, tormēts, doubts & perplexities ẏ we may haue as in the world. Now we when we shalbe come thus farre, we may not maruel if god

be vnto vs as a lio, as to ꝑ we fele of him, for thys word is not here spoken as touchinge the nature of God. And when he hath thus turmented the king Ezechias, it is not for ꝑ he hath forgotte his goodnes & mercy, which on thother sid he sheweth vnto him. But it was nedefull ꝑ Ezechias should first know himself to be in the hads of God, as betwene the pawes, & in the throte of a lio, & so must it be that we come to the same point as I haue already saide, for otherwise God can not winne vs. There is suche an arrogancye in vs ꝑ we alwaye think our selues to be strong & mightie, & that we can neuer be beaten down but with a great thonder and lightening. And forasmuch as we can not magnifie the power of God as it ought to be, we talk of it, & we think somwhat of it, but we do not geue vnto it an infinite greatnes so as we be rauished when we think of it, & so as it occupie all our senses in such sort as it ought. It behoueth therfore ꝑ our lord do (as a man wold say) trāsfigure him self, ꝑ is to say, make himself terrible more thā all ꝑ lions in the world, & that he declare himselfe vnto vs ꝓ such a power ꝑ we be vtterly afraid ꝓ all, euē as if we espied a hūdred deathes. For the wrath of god is not only to make vs die: but we se the gulfes of hell opē whē god sheweth himself as our iudge. It is therfore no maruel if we be thē so astonished, as if a lio shoulde teare vs in peces betwene his pawes, & breake our bones ꝓ hasteth, & if we cōceiue such horror whē god is against vs: frō hēce thē procede al these cōplaints ꝑ we see in the Psalmes. They ꝑ ar not exercised in these batails & perplexities, think ꝑ Dauid meant to make his trouble greater thā it was, or they thinke it likely that he was very delycate: but when we come to the proue, we fele ꝑ there is not one word to much

for the stormes that the faythfull fele when God searcheth them earnestly and to the quicke, surmount al that may be expressed with mouth. Let vs not thinke then that this similitude that is here put forth by the kyng Ezechias is superfluous, for we shall finde the maiestie of God a great deale more dreadefull then all the woordes here conteined can expresse, when it shall please hym to call vs to accompt, and make vs fele that he is a iudge: for if the mountayns tremble before him and melt away, howe may we that are nothynge stande before hym? So then let vs note wel whē sometime god taketh trū vs ẏ tast of his goodnes, & we shall thynk our selues to be cut of from his kyngdome, and perceyue nothing but our sinnes whiche are as great heapes of wood to kindle the fire of his wrath, and when we cōsider only that forasmuche as he is almyghty, it must nedes bee that he stryke vs with lyghtning & ouerwhelme vs. When we fele these thynges we must nedes be altogether oppressed vntyll he releue vs. And in dede in one minute of tyme we shall be plunged euen to the depth of hell, were it not that he helde vs fast by the hand, and that we were after a secrete maner stayed by hym, although we see not howe. Loe this is a doctrine whiche ought to serue vs on the one side to humble vs that we may forget all the strengthe whiche men thynke to haue in them selues, and reste our selues vpon the maiestie of God, and that we bee altogether throwen downe vnder that maiestie, and yet neuertheles that we may knowe the ende and necessitie that we haue of hym to vpholde vs, euen after an incomprehensible maner. And when we

shall

shall thinke that he hath altogether forsaken and forgotten vs, let vs be assured that yet he wyll holde vs by the hande, we shall not perceiue it, but yet he wyll doe it, and we can neuer get out of suche a maze vnlesse by his infinite mercye he drawe vs out: as it is certaine that Ezechias had neuer bene relieued, if God by his holy spirit had not sustained hym within, and enlyghtened hym whyle he was in these great troubles. Now after he hath so sayde, he added. Lorde, the payne vexeth me sore, comfort thou me. But what shall I say: It is he that hath done it euē as he hath sayde it. Here Ezechias confesseth in summe that (as touching him self) he is vanquished, and that there is no remedy without God helpe, and set hym selfe as pledge. The word that he vseth signifieth some time to answer for, which mē terme to be suretie, it may then be thus expressed. Lord be thou my suretie in this extremitie, for I can no more. Thou seest that there is no more power in me, then must thou answere as suertie for me in my place. And this worde also is often among the complaintes of Job. But it signifieth also to refreshe, and all come to one point, to wit, as we haue touched before, that Ezechias knew that he had no strength and that he muste nedes perishe as touching him selfe: as if a man should declare that he hath nothing to satisfie his creditour that which he oweth, he commeth then to God for refuge. Nowe haue we here yet an other good admonition whiche is that we can not call vpon god as we ought except we be led to this reasō to make our selues as nothing. For while mē kepe I wote not what remnant, it is sure that they

shall

shal neuer cal vpon God but by halues. We must then be so brought in subiection that being altogether stripped naked of our selues, our folly may constrayne vs to seke in God that whiche wanteth in our selues. Loe this is one thing to be noted: Yet in the meane time we are aduertised not to be discouraged when God shal so haue spoyled vs that we shalbe voide of all strength. For we may yet moue our matter vnto hym folowynge the steppes of Ezechias. Lord I can no more, so I beseche thee that thou wylt ease me. Loe this it is that we haue to learne of this place. But it is true that we are not alway pressed as Ezechias was, but howe soeuer it be, though the constraint be not so violent, yet ought we to be spoyled and voide of all false perswasion of our owne strength that God may be glorified as he is worthy. And in the meane tyme as I haue sayde, let vs followe with our prayers and requestes vnto God, though we be so vanquyshed that we haue not one whit of strengthe in vs, let vs neuertheles haue our recourse to our God, & he shall geue vs that whiche we want, for asmuche as in hym lieth all the fulnesse of good thynges.

Nowe he further addeth, and what shall I saye? for he that hath spoken hath also done it. Here some thynke that Ezechias woulde nowe reioyse keipng the deliueraunce whiche God had sent hym that he breaketh all his complayntes whiche he vsed, and that now he hath his mouth open to confesse the goodnesse of God. But the naturall meanyng of the text beareth it not. Rather Ezechias breaketh his matter to shewe the anguishe whiche suffered hym not to continue as he would

he would gladly haue done. And we see manye suche examples in all the Psalmes where there is some declaration of the chastisementes whiche God sent eyther to Dauid or to his other seruauntes. Then when God hath so sharply afflicted his people, ther haue bene such like requestes as nowe and then the faythefull enteriace alwayes, I wote not howe, as if they were vtterly cast awaye. So doth Ezechias nowe. And there is an example verye lyke in the nyne and thirtye Psalme, whiche we haue already alledged. For there Dauid also acknowlegeth that he had to do with God. It was then muche to knowe that men persecuted hym, but when he sawe the hand of God to be against hym, I maye not (sayd he) come to plede here, nor to pursue actions, there is nothyng better for me than vtterly to kepe silēce and take the condemnaciō vpon me. And in Job we see many suche lyke complayntes. Nowe let vs come to the meaning of Ezechias. What shal I saye? it is he whiche hath sayd and he also hath done it. He lamented not as they whiche founde no hope, for suche people wyll crye alas, but all their sighes vanishe awaye on the ayre. Contrariwyse Ezechias sheweth vs here that if we wyll haue God to heare vs, we must open all our passions and sorowes before hym, that we may be vnburthened, as it is said in the Psalme. Ezechias hetherto hath folowed this order, for is that he hath opened al his perplexities and cares whiche he endured as if he layde them abrode rounde about God. But now he reproueth hym selfe. Alas sayeth he: what shold I doe? for it is God hymselfe whiche hath sayde it and done it. Psal. 39.

He hath

He hath sent me this message by his Prophet, that there was no hope of life, it is then in vaine that I pray vnto hym. What shall I auayle thē in all my prayers?, what shal I do? And I wote not whether he wil haue pitie on me. We se now howe Ezechias outraged against him selfe. It is true that suche disputacion proceded of infidelitie, but it is necessary that there should be in fidelitie in vs to the ende that our fayth might the better be proued. Yet this is not ment to speake properly that we shoulde be infideles, when we are so tossed with vnquietnes, but that we haue a feble faith & that our Lorde exercise vs in suche maner that we in the meane tyme maye knowe what we are, and that without hym we should in a hundred thousand times vāquished euery houre. Lo in effect what Ezechias ment to declare here. What shall I say? For I fele not that the prayer and entreating whiche I can make, doth profit me, and why? God afflicteth me and I fele no maner of ease. I am afrayd to present my selfe before him. Yet neuertheles I truste that my request shall not be reiected of hym, although that I knowe for a truthe that when he speaketh by the mouthe of his Prophet, he hathe forthwith stretched out his hande, and I fele by proue that thys message is not as a threateninge of lyttle chyldren, but that God hath published and proclaymed warre against me, whiche he hath done as it were with fyre and bloud, and it appeareth that there is no more remedy.

Nowe haue we here a good place to shewe vs that we ought to despise Sathan and al vnfaithfulnes, when we haue to doe with prayinge to God,

God, so that when we shall haue a hundreth thousand disputacions, yet we shall not let to cõclude, so it is that I shall ouercome all maner of lettes in the strengthe of my God, and I will seke him although he repulse me, & though it appeare that he hath an hundred armies to thruste me far frõ hym, yet wyll I come vnto hym. Thus haue I tolde you howe we ought to be armed when we are to praye vnto God. For as we haue nede in all extremities to runne vnto our God, so must we knowe that Sathan applieth all his power to stoppe vs that we haue no accesse vnto God. And there is none of the faythfull whiche doeth not fele this more than he would desire. But in the meane tyme let vs ierne to know the sickness, that in nede we may take such remedy as is here geuen vs of God. When then the deuill shall set before vs: What shouldest thou doe to praye to God? And what thinkest thou that in so greate wretchednesse as thou felest in thy selfe, he wyll ayde thee? And what thinkest thou myserable creature? to whome preparest thou to go? Is it not God himselfe that doth persecute thee? But let vs passe forwarde, this notwithstanding, and force our selues to breake through al stayes, treadyng vnder foote suche wandryng discourses.

Moreouer it chaunceth that being yet in some rest if we lift vp our wit to God, by and by this commeth in our fantasie. Alas what are we? shal we dare to approche vnto God? Howe ofte haue we offended him? And hereupon we sometyme conclude to holde vs there still. But yet such disputacions are very ill, and they are euen so many blasphemies, if God would lay thē to our charge,

as when

as when we make questiō or doubte whether we be heard or no, certayne it is that this is a deadly offence, and if God dyd not vpholde vs in our feblenesse, we coulde not but bee drowned. But howesoeuer it be, after we haue bene condempned, after we haue felte that our spirite is wrapped in many dispayres, and that we are in a maze: Yet for all that let vs take good courage, and after we haue sayde, alas what shall I doe: let vs breake that stroke and saye: I muste yet pray and seke for my God. And why: for he hath sayde that he wyll heare them that seeke vnto hym, euen from the depest bottomes. Now then loe, this is the fit tyme when I must goe to him. This it is that we haue to learne of this doctrine of Ezechias, when we see these broken vnprofit tales, and that he hath chattred, and we see hys passions so excessiue that they torment hym. Let vs knowe that it was Gods pleasure to shewe here a mirrour wherein we myght beholde our owne feblenesse and the temtations whereunto we are subiect, that we shold fight against them, and styll to followe on tyll we fele the releke that he doth promyse vs, euen as we shall fele in dede, so that we haue a true continuaunce and faile not by our owne slacknesse and slouthfulnesse in the mydway e.

Nowe let vs throwe oure selues downe before the maiestie of our good God, acknowe-ledging our faultes, praying hym, that more and more he wyll make vs to fele them, vntyll suche tyme as we be vtterly spoyled. And though he haue alway muche to reproue in vs: Yet let vs neuer cesse to hope in his mercy, and that he wyll

make

make vs so to taste the same in the name of oure Lorde Jesus Christe, that it may geue vs a true patience in all our afflictions, and that we may be so holden in his obedience that we desire nothyng but to offre our selues vnto hym and by hym to bee throughly sanctified. And that not only he graunt this grace vnto vs, but also to all peoples and nations.

(.*.)

☞ *What shall I saye? he who hath sayde it hath also done it. I wyll walke leasurly all the dayes of my lyfe in the bitternes of my soule. Lorde, to all those that shall lyue hereafter, the life of my spirite shall be notable among them, in that thou hast cast me in a slepe, and hast reuiued me. Behold in my prosperitie the bitternes was bytter vnto me: And thou hast loued my soule, to drawe it out of the graue, because thou hast cast my sinnes behynd thy back.*

WE haue already herebefore declared that the good kyng Ezechias complayning that it is God that persecuteth him, is more confused for that, than if he had all the men in the worlde his ennemies, and if they all had conspired to tormente him, as of truthe it is a case muche harder & that ought to amase vs more without comparison if God lyft vp him selfe against vs, than if all creatures did make warre vpō vs. Behold then the cause why Ezechias standeth cōfused and in trouble, because he well feleth that the thinge whiche God declared vnto him by his Prophet Esaye, is nowe fulfilled in hym, and this it is that moste toucheth vs to the quicke when we make comparison, betwene the worde of God and that which

which we fele of his iudgements. If God did sim
ply but strike vs, we might wel be throwen down
wythall: but when he addeth also his word to re-
proue vs, to make vs know that it is he that doth
chastise vs, yea and that for our sinnes, lo this is a
cause of muche greater confusion. Expressly then
Ezechias saieth: According as he hath spoken he
hath also done it, and therfore he doeth thereupon
conclude that he hath nothing to replie agaynst it.
For if we had to do wt men, we might well make
our complaintes againste them, but when we are
to accuse God, the case must passe on his side. We
may pleade for a tyme, but he shall alway be iusti-
fied, when we shalbe condemned. Therfore it is
lost tyme to thinke to amend our harme when we
shall not escape condẽnation before God, but when
we desire to stande in oure owne defence, and vse
murmuryng and complaint, all this doth nothing
but enforce our cuyl, euen so farre as to drowne vs
altogether. And therfore let vs kepe oure mouthe
close as it is sayd in Job: for that is it whiche the
good kyng Ezechias meant in this place.

Nowe further he saieth: *That all the tyme of his lyfe he wyll walke in feare, & go on easily or softly as a man whose pride is abated, & draweth his legges after him. Yea in the bitternes of his soule.*

Here Ezechias declareth that God hathe so engraued in hym the feling of this correction, and hath so painted it in his hert, that the remembrãce therof shall neuer be blotted out. It maye manye tymes come to passe (and we finde it in prose ofter

than we nede) that when God presseth vs, we be altogether astonished, & then we grone, & if we be to cõfesse our faultes & humilitie, it is marueil to here vs. Wisely we be not niggardly in wordes, ether to shew ỹ greatnes of our griefe, or to declare our faults, or to bielle the name of god. But we do nothing but shake our eares by & by after, & by the next morow after god hath geuẽ vs release or rest, we think no more of it. Lo in what sort men be, & howe they seke God (as it is sayd vnto the Prophet) while he doth draw them vnto him by force, then they cal vpon him, and confesse the det as we haue said, but so soone as God spareth them, they are as they were before, they lift vp theyr heades like stagges, they do nothinge but reioyse, where before they were so striken down as nothing cold be more, their face was all amazed with feare, shortlye, there was euen nowe nothinge but sorrow, and fourthwith they make great chere, they retourne to theyr delites, and (that more is) they fare as if they meant to despise God openlye. We se then this inconstancie, this chaunge, this lightnes in maner in all men. On the contrary side Ezechias saith here that it is not only for the tyme present that he knoweth that God hath chastised him, but for so long as he shal liue in this world he shall alwaye haue minde of the correction that he hathe receaued, and he shall goe as wyth a trembiynge pace, for the worde whiche he vseth, doeth some tyme signifie to go softely, and sometyme to remoue. Nowe in effecte, he meaneth to saye that he shall neuer haue stedfast pace, but he shall be so muche enfebled, that he shall be as a man drawen out of the ditch, or as he that hath a long time ben sicke, he doeth with great paine drawe his legges

after him, and though he shewe him selfe abroade in the stretes yet men see well that, that is all he can do, & when he standeth by he semeth styll redie to rele and stagger. Nowe see we in a summe what Ezechias meant to say. Hereby we are put in remembraunce not to thinke straunge if God sometyme afflict vs more rigorously than we wold. For we haue not sufficiently profited by his roddes vntyll we be truely humbled for all oure lyfe after. Who is he that shall find thys in hym selfe? Let euery one nowe looke, ifa moneth after that God hath shewed him mercy he hathe reknowleged his faultes and tremble therat. But contrariwise (as I haue already saide) we seeke nothinge but to blot out all remembraunce of them, for we thinke it to be matter that moueth melancholie. Sithe then we so easily forget the roddes of God, let vs not maruell if after we haue bene once chastised he returne againe the seconde time and shew him selfe so sharpe that we shall not knowe where to become. Wherfore behold what we haue to do: that is, that during the corrections, and when we be in trouble we beare patiently the rigour of god, knowynge that it is not without cause that he vseth so exceedyng great sharpenes against vs', and that it is bicause he knoweth we haue nede of it: take this for one note. And also for another note, that we endeuour to awake, bycause of the great slouthfulnesse that is in vs, for we are so sluggishe and so coolde, that it is a pitie to see. Let vs then durynge the tyme of oure affliction thyncke vpon all oure offences, that we may haue a feelynge and conceauynge thereof engraued euen in the bottome of our herts, & when God hath deliuered vs,

Let vs styll thynke vpon it, and let not the felyng of our euill be only for one day or for a small space, but as we praye God to suppoꝛte vs, and to geue vs leisure to bleſſe his name and to reioyſe in him, let vs so do it that he be not compelled cõtinually to stryke vs lyke asses, seing our careleſnesse and the slowneſſe that is in vs. Let vs preuente the roddes of God vnleſſe we wyl haue them alwayes tyed at our backes. And nowe lette vs note that Ezechias trembled in suche sorte, that he ceſſed not to be holden vp by the hande of God, and to seke for comforte in God, knowyng well that he was mercifull vnto hym. But theſe two thynges agree well, that on the one side the faithfull are alwayes in care fearyng to stombie the seconde and thirde tyme when they haue once palte a deadlye fall. And yet neuertheleſſe they take courage and truſt in God to walke freely, for as muche as they knowe that he wyll neuer fayle them. Loe this it is ẏ we haue to practiſe, on the one side to thinke vpon our sinnes and offences, and to be moued with horrour, seing that we haue deſerued ẏ God should set hym ſelfe against vs, and that this do so cut vs that it make vs to walke trembiyngly, & as scant able to goe. Loe howe we oughte to bee throwen downe and humbled vnder the hande of God. For there is no queſtion hereof beynge to wylde, but rather we muſt knowe that the chiefe vertue of the faithfull when God doth afflict and punish them is to be as brought to naught, & yet alwaye drawynge our legges after vs to goe on our pace ſithe it pleaſeth God to shewe vs mercy. And that we know, that though we haue offended him, yet he will alway continue his goodnes to-

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ſwarde vs, he ſwil geue vs courage, and that therfore on the other ſide we become freſh agayne. Lo this is the ſumme that we haue here to learne of Ezechias.

After he addeth that the bitternes became to him bitter in his proſperitie. Here he enforceth ye euill that he hath felt, becauſe he was ſodenly taken with it, whē he thought he was at reſt & free from affliction. As on the other ſide we ſee that ye thing whiche is forſeen farre of, may be more patiently ſuffred. For what is the cauſe that diſcourageth vs when we are in afflictiō, but that euery one during his proſperitie maketh him ſelfe beleue that all ſhal go wel. If a man did thinke of the death of his father, or of his wife, or of his childrē, if he did think that his own life were ſubiect to calamities, it is certain that he woulde be prepared with defenſe againſt all temtations, ſo as he wold not be found ſo amaſed when thei come vpon him. But becauſe euery mā deceiueth him ſelf in vaine hope, that is it that troubleth vs out of meaſure, when our Lorde ſendeth any aduerſitie. Nowe Ezechias confeſſeth that it is ſo chaunced vnto him, and for this cauſe he ſayeth that hys griefe hath bene ſo much the more bitter for that it happened vnto him in his proſperitie. For we haue ſeene here before, howe God afflicted hym euen to the extremitie, that is to wete, when he was ſpoyled of his Realme, and that al his lande was waſted by his enmemies. He was beſeged in the town of Hieruſalem, there he was brought vnder, there they mocked hym, there they ſpake of hym all ſhame and reproche that was poſſible, yea, euen the name of God was vilanouſlye blaſphe-

med. Lo thus was Ezechias all confused. Hereupon God deliuered him miraculously, euen as if he had come downe from heauen to succour hym. He seing that discomfiture so great whiche was done by the hande of the aungel, reioyced, and not without good reason, for God gaue him cause hauing declared suche a signe of fauour toward him, as if he had reformed all the worlde at his desyre. But there was a fault, whersoeuer it was, that is that he thinketh no more of his affliction passed, & resteth him to muche, that is to say, he becometh careles and negligēt. Lo herfore nowhe saith that his sorowe is come vpon him in his peace and in his prosperitie. Nowe here we haue a very profitable warning, that is to say, when we knowe the graces of God, we must so reioyse that yet we forget not the tyme passed, and that for the tyme to come we alwaye haue our estate before our eyes, that is to say, that with the turning of a hand our lyfe shalbe turned into death, our light into darkenesse, as we see the dyuerse chaunges in thys frayle life. Briefly let vs so magnifie the goodnes of God, when he assureth vs that he wil maintein vs in peace and at rest, that in the meane tyme we still consider what our frailtie is, and let vs not be daseled when God shall blesse vs and sende vs all after our desire, let not that (I saye) make vs fal to muche on slepe, but let euery man make him selfe ready when it shal please him to sende vs any chaunge to receiue alwayes in feare, in humilitie, and in all pacience that whiche he wyll sende vs. If we doe so, we shall not finde the hand of God so greuous nor so heauy vpon vs as we are wont to do. But whē we ar to sound on slepe, although

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we knowe the grace of God, wherof we presently reioyse, he must awake vs, yea and pluck vs hard by the eare, yea and laye great stryppes vpon vs. *Psalm.30.* And here we haue one example in the kyng Ezechias, as we haue also an other in Dauid. For in the. xxx. Psalme he confesseth that he was so dronke that felicitie had made hym to forget hys estate. I haue sayde in myne abundance, I shall no more be shaken. And how so? Dauid had had so many prickes to pricke hym forwarde, he had bene exercised so many wayes to haue alwaies in mynde what the life of man was, and he did profit right well therin, for he had bene a long tyme as in the shadow of death. He had bene persecuted of the people, being prysoner among his ennemies, and hauing no minute of rest. Then when God had set hym on the roiall seate, he concluded that he shoulde neuer stomble, and that he should therein remaine peasable. If Dauid hauinge the spirit of God in suche excellence as we knowe, hauing had so many proues that he was altogether rauished vnto God, yet neuertheiesse hath so forgot himself: what shal become of vs? After he addeth. It was of thy free goodnesse that I was vpholden O Lorde, thou hast establyshed me as on a mountaine, but thou turnedst thy face, and lo I was troubled. Thus sheweth he his vnthãkfulnes in that. For although he had not altogether forgot the blessing which he had receiued of ỹ hãd of God, yet is it so that he did not thinke vpõ this, god hath deliuered me once ỹ I shold alway haue my recourse vnto him: knowing ỹ my life hãgeth as by a thred except ỹ stay of it be on his goodnesse, & that frõ minute to minute he worketh, cõfessing

selling that by and by I should perysshe if he continued not still to ayde me. Dauid thought not vpon this, and he knewe also that he had sayled, and so he addeth after. Lorde thou hast hyd thy face and behold I was troubled. So is it of Ezechias, he was in peace, and loe sodenly God wounded hym so that the stripe was deadly, & he coulde not cõceiue any thing but such an astonishment as if God had striken him with lightning from heauen. Therfore of necessitie must it be that he receiued a terrible bitternesse.

Nowe let vs applie this doctrine to our profit, and let vs not stay till God make vs with force of strypes to knowe our infirmitie. But whyle he doth yet spare vs and whyle he hathe pitie of our feblenesse, let vs not cesse to thynke of hym, and let vs feare hym, keping our selues hid as it were vnder his wynges, knowynge that we can not stand one minute without his ayde. To the rest, if sometime we be ouertaken, let vs knowe it was because we were to fast a slepe.

He addeth a lytle after that God hath deliuered his soule, but he vseth a maner of speech which emporteth more. He sayth thou hast loued my soule, or thou hast had thy good pleasure in it to plucke it back from the graue. By this circumstance he magnifieth the goodnesse of God so much ẏ more for that he is come to seke hym euen to the graue. For if God doe holde vs styll in our estate, I graunt we therby knowe that we are beholding to him, but therin we knowlege it but very coldly. But if he deliuer vs from death, then we better perceiue howe good he is, for that in suche extremitie he as it were cometh downe vnto vs.

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For it semeth vnto vs that we are not much bound vnto God, if he preserue vs in this life, because we take that to be but as an order of nature. True it is that the more he spareth vs so muche the more we ought to fele his fatherlye goodnes, but we do it not, and so by reason of our dulnes it is become nedefull that God worke of another fashion. Now then as I haue already sayde, if that God plucke vs out of the graue, and that we haue bene as forsaken for a time, that it semed we were cut of from al hope, that euen men disdaigned to loke vpon vs as if we were pore rotten carrions, if in this case God haue pitie vpon vs, in this he sheweth vs so much greater brightnesse to se his mercye, and so much more we haue occasiō to acknowledge what and howe infinite his bountye is, in this that god hath so plucked vs backe from the death. Lo, this it is that Ezechias meant to say.

Lord (saith he) thou hast loued my soule: And how so? was there any thing in it that might moue God to loue it. Alas, no: for it was nothinge but shadow, a dead thing. I was (saith he) at the graue, and then thou declaredst thy loue towarde me, when then we shalbe altogether disfigured, & that God neuertheles wyll vouchsafe to caste eye vpon vs, and to haue care of vs, in this we ought much more to be enflamed to blesse his name, and to geue him such praise as doth here the good king Ezechias. Behold thē in a summe what we haue to learne of this place: that is, for asmuch as God seeth that we are not touched enoughe with the good thinges that he hathe done for vs, nor wyth his graces, and that it is nedefull that we be so striken downe, and in suche extremitie that there be

be in vs no more hope of life, that when we ſhalbe as forſaken of him and of men, he maye then take vs to mercy. Thus are we earneſtly touched and made to geue him thankes, knowyng that he ſaw nothing in vs but miſeries when he ſhewed hys mercy vpon vs.

Now he ſaieth alſo on the other ſide: Lorde, they that ſhall lyue after, ſhall know that the lyfe of my ſpirite hath bene prolonged. This place becauſe of the ſhortnes therof is darke, for it is not a ſentence layd out at length, but they are as it were broken wordes. He ſaieth in ſumme: Lorde they ſhall liue amonges them, and in them all the lyfe of my ſpirite, thou haſt caſt me on ſlepe, and thou haſt reuiued me. Becauſe he ſpeaketh not here of the yeres in the beginning of the verſe, that is the cauſe of the ſhortnes. But when we loke nearer, we ſhall finde that Ezechias meant to ſay that the miracle whiche had bene done vpon his perſone ſhuld be knowē not only for a dai, but alſo after his deceaſe. Some men do expound it, ỳ God ſhall alſo prolonge the life of other: but that expoſition is not to purpoſe. For Ezechias meant to ſaye, that this was not a cōmon ordinary benefit, but rather he hath felt that God hath wrought wyth him after an extraordinary faſhiō. Hereunto tendeth his purpoſe, ỳ this miracle of God ſhal neuer be put vnder fote, but thoughe he be dead, yet we ſhall ſtill talk of it. Before he ſaid I ſhal remember all the time of my lyfe howe I haue bene chaſtiſed, & I ſhall feele the ſtrokes: for I yet go ſtaggering with all. Now he ſtretcheth forther & largelier ỳ which he ſaide before, that is to ſaye, that not onely he him ſelf ſhalbe humbled before God,

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but also all the worlde shall haue occasion to saye: Behold here an act worthy of perpetuall memory that god hath done for a mã. For we ought to desire ẏ all the good thinges ẏ God bestoweth vpon vs, be also knowen of other, that they maye take ensample therof, & that they maye serue for theyr edification. And we se whẽ Dauid wold be heard in his requestes, he addeth commonly this reason, that euery man shall thinke of it, ẏ the good shalbe edified, & the wicked confounded. Lord (saith he) whẽ men shal se that thou so assistest thine, al they that call vpon thee shall reioyce, & shalbe so muche more cõfirmed in waityng for the like: & also the wicked shalbe cõfoũded & though they now mock at the trust ẏ I haue in thee, seyng ẏ thou hast afflicted me, if they knowe ẏ I haue not bene disappointed when I haue had my recourse vnto thee, they shalbe abashed. Thus much then saith Ezechias, now ẏ this miracle of God shall profit not onely him but also other, as a thing knowen & notorious to all. And after he amplifieth it, saying ẏ it shall not be for a final time, but also after his decease. For asmuch as his lif hath ben so prolõged, it shall be talked of for euer. For (saieth he) thou hast cast me on slepe. This worde to caste on slepe emporteth ẏ he was as it were in the graue, & after was reuiued. As in dede this miracle is euen yet at this day celebrate in ẏ church of god, & shal be to thend of ẏ worlde. So thẽ we se ẏ it hath not only profited one person alone, but hath bene a cõfirmation generally to all ẏ faithful, in this ẏ they waite for God, to haue pitie vpon them in theyr necessitie to succor them, and though he do not prolong theyr life in such sort yet ẏ he shall kepe them

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to the ende, and that if he se them striken downe, he shall lift them vp againe, he shall geue thē some token of his pitie, so that in life and deth they shall fele him alway theyr sauiour, and shall knowe that they haue not bene forsaken nor geuē ouer of him. Loe wherunto this song is profitable, & to whas intent it was made.

Nowe ought we to haue suche like affection, as Ezechias had, to endeuour so much as shall lye in vs that the graces of God may be knowen of al the world, although they specially perteine to vs. For when God doeth good to euery one of vs, we ought not onely in secrete to thank him, feling our selues bound vnto him, but to endeuour to publish the same, that other may be confirmed and hope in God, seyng such a proue of his goodnes to thē that call vpon him: and that praise may be geuen hym in common as S. Paule saith, when the faithful shall all together praise God, that he hath bene deliuered, and that this geuynge of thanckes shall geue suche a sounde, that this shalbe a cause why God shall alwaye deliuer him so muche the more that praises may be giuē to him by many. I graūt we oft do publish such graces of God as we haue felt, but many do it by ambition and hipocrisie, for makynge a shewe to magnifie the name of God, they drawe a part of the praise to them selues. Let vs beware of that, and let vs haue an vpright and pure affection, so as euery one may learne to loke vnto God, and to haue his hope wholy staied vpon him, and let vs haue this zele and this feruent desire that all creatures beare vs company when we are to bleſſe the name of God.

Moreouer when God shall as it were haue

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ſtriken vs dead, and reuiued vs by his grace, let this ſo much ẏ̄ more moue vs to praiſe him. There is not ſo ſmale a benefit that deſerueth not thankes, and when we ſhall applie all ourc wittes to thanke God onely for this that he nourisheth vs, yet can we not aquite our ſelues of the hundreth part of our det. But if God vſe a more excellent maner to declare his fauour toward vs, and that the good thinges which he doeth for vs, are as it were wonderfull and incomprehenſible of men, our bond encreſeth ſo much the more, and we haue ſo much the leſſe excuſe if we be not then enflamed to praiſe him with full mouth, and to preache euerye where the goodnes that he hathe made vs to feele.

After this Ezechias addeth that God hathe caſt his ſinnes behynd his backe. Here he leadeth vs back to that we ſaw before, that is, that al ẏ̄ he endured was but the payment that was due vnto him for his faultes. And that nowe this that god hath bene merciſull vnto him, is for that he hathe hidden and buried his offences which brought all the euyll vpon him. This ſentence is worthye to be well noted. For (as we haue before declared) although we knowe well that aduerſities happen not vnto vs by chaunce, but that it is the hande of God that ſtryketh vs, yet ſo it is that we can not come to the true cauſe as we ought. And that is partly becauſe euery one doeth flatter him ſelfe in his owne faultes, and partly alſo becauſe we entre not in iudgement or examination of our owne life to knowe whether it hathe bene well ordred: for wyllingly we are very lothe to be diſquieted. And yet muſt we come vnto it, for that is ẏ̄ true ſigne

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of repentance whyen men of them ſelues ſearch the depth of their ſinnes, and tarry not till God forze them vnto it, but they preſent thē ſelues vnto him they ſommon them ſelues ſo as they nede neyther ſargeant noz officer, but they examine themſelues and ſay: Alas, how haue I lyued? how ſtande I with God? When men of their own mynde enter into this triall, in this thei declare that God hath touched thē by his holy ſpirite. But this is a rare thing as I haue ſayde, on the one ſyde hipocriſie ſtoppeth vs that we examine not our owne faultes, and that we diſcouer them not, ſeking always to flee from the ſhame and to hide our owne cuyl: yea and we ſay that the euill is wei, and we make our ſelues beleue that we haue not offended God, oz at leaſt we make our faultes leſſe as if thei wer nothynge, and as if we neded but only wype our mouthes. Loe howe we are caried away by pride and ambition that is roted in our nature whē we come not rightly to God in knowledging what we are. On the other part we are deſirous to flee from ſozowe, as naturally it is a thyng that greueth vs. Now there is no ſozow ſo great as whē we thinke that God is our iudge, and that we ar euill doers before hym, foz there we fele ẏ whiche before hath bene ſayde, that he breaketh our bones as a Lyon: the wzathe of God is ſo terrible a thyng that it is no maruell though we flee from it. And yet is this a faulte, foz we oughte not to make our ſelues lyke to them that are ſo blockiſh that they wyll in no caſe thynke vpon that which they haue deſerued of God, that is the puniſhmēt wherof they ar wozthy. For this cauſe we ought ſo muche the moze to note thys doctrine where

Ezechias

Ezechias leadeth vs by his example to knowe our synnes, so ofte as the Lorde doth rygorously handle vs, that we may not only knowe that it is his hand which afflicted vs, but also that then he seruyth his processe vpon vs, and accuseth vs of the synnes that we haue committed, and bicause we would not of our owne mynde come to haue our cause tryed before hym, and to aske hym pardon that he is dryuen to drawe vs thereunto by force. This is the firste thynge that we haue to learne of this place.

The seconde point is that when God withdrawyth his hande which he had heuyly layde vpon vs, that is a token that he is mercifull vnto vs, & that he wyll no more laye our synnes vnto our charge. True it is that somtime God after that he hath afflicted the wicked and reproued, leaueth them there and they ware lustier than they were before as I haue already sayd. But here Ezechias sheweth how we ought to fele the goodnesse of God when he sendeth vs any release, whē he releueth vs of any sickenesse, whē he deliuereth vs from any daunger, when he comforteth vs in pouertie, when we haue bene in trouble and sorrowe and he drawyth vs out. If then we be sad and sorrowefull, it is not enough for vs to fele the euyll, but we oughte to looke vnto the principall cause & to come to the originall spring therof. So when a litle babe crieth, so sone as the teate is geuen him he is appeased. And why? he sucketh & is content, for he hath no vnderstāding to go further than to his owne hūger, he knoweth not whence ỹ meat cometh, he hath no skil to thanke her ỹ geue him his substāce, for he hath neither wit nor reson

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But whan a man of the age of discretion shall see his father angry with him, and shall here him say to hym: away villein, get the out of my house it is certaine that this sorrowe more perceth hym to the quicke to be thus cast of by his father than to endure hunger or thirste, & all the powerties that it is possible to thinke on. But if the father afterwarde doe pardon hym at the request of his frendes, or for that he seeth his sonne to be sory that he hath offended hym, & sayth vnto hym, come home againe and dyne with me, if that childe haue any reason he wyll not so muche esteme his dyner as that he is returned into the fauour and loue of his father, so as he had rather to fast and to abide hunger and thirst than euer to geue occasion to his father so to caste hym of agayne, & is a greate deale more glad that his father hath forgeuen hym than of eating and drinking his fill.

Nowe let vs applie this to our vse. The moste part are as litle chyldren: if God be quickely appeased with them and plucke backe his hande, so as they haue no more outwarde occasion to be sorowefull, by and by they waxe ioyfull, and prayse be God (say they) which hath holpē me out of this sickenes: but in saying prayse be God they thinke not vpon hym, they enter not into examination of their sinnes, thei loke not vpō the cause why God afflicted them, and so sone as they be cōforted they doe not acknowledge that it is because God loueth them and is fauourable to them. And yet thereunto ought all their ioy to be applied and not to say behold my myrth is returned. He that hath bene in any daunger, if he see himselfe deliuered, he reioyseth that he is no more in tormēt as he was,

but in

but in the meane time doth he loke vpon the prin-
cipall benefit and soueraigne felicitie of men, to be
reconciled vnto God: Mo, that cometh not in his
mynde. Mo muche the more ought we to take
holde of this doctrine, where Ezechias sayth not
only, I am nowe vp on foote agayne, and it hathe
pleased God to relene me, my life is prolonged, as
he hath sayde before: but he resteth all vpon thys:
God hath pardoned me my faultes, he hath taken
me to mercie, he layeth not to my charge the offē-
ces that I haue committed, he hath so forgeuen
me that nowe he is well pleased with me, he will
no more call me to accōpt as my iudge, for he hath
forgotten all my sinnes and hath cast them behynd
his backe. Loe this it is wherunto Ezechias lea-
deth vs by his example.

Mo, as oft as we shalbe afflicted by the hand of
God, let vs learne to entre into examinatiō of our
owne sinnes: and when we praye God to delyuer
vs, let vs not set the cart before the horse, but let
vs pray him to take vs to his mercy. And though
we haue deserued a thousande moe afflictiōs thā
he maketh vs to endure, let vs praye that yet he
cesse not to be mercifull vnto vs: and whē he hath
set vs vp againe, let vs geue hym prayses not on-
ly for the good that he hath done vs touching our
bodies, but for that whiche is muche more to bee
esteemed, that he hath forgotten all our offences &
so is agreed agayne wt vs that he accepteth vs as
his owne chyldren, because he tourneth his face
from our sinnes, for whyle God loketh vpon our
sinnes he can not loke vpon vs but with indigna-
tion, and he doth but abhorre vs.

Then that God may loke vpon vs with a mer-

cifull and fauourable face, it must firste be that he forget our sinnes, and thinke no more on them. True it is that when we so speake, it is after the maner of men, for we know that all is present before God. But when we say that he muste forget our sinnes and loke no more on them, that is to expresse that he cal vs not to accompt, but loue vs as well as if we neuer had offended him.

Moreouer by this fashion of speech that Ezechias vseth, we se what is the remission of our sinnes, that is, that God cast them behind his back, and cast them there in suche sorte that he punishe them no more, nor aske vengeaunce on them. And this is worthy to be noted: For the deuill alwaye trauaileth to darken this doctrine bicause it is the principall point of oure saluation, and as it is shewed vs in holy scripture, there is no other righteousnes nor holynes, but this fre forgeuenes of sinnes. Happie is the man (saith Dauid) whose sinnes are parboned. Saint Paule saieth that hereby we see what is our righteousnes, and that Dauid hath made a briefe summe therof.

For this cause the deuill hath alwaye trauailed by suttle meanes to tourne men from this that they may not knowe what nede they haue of thys forgeuenes of sinnes, as in the Popes church we partly see they say it is not but with penance and confession, and beside that, that we muste bringe some recompence, and if God pardon vs the fault yet that he reserueth the punishment as a iudge. And that this should be a derogation to his maiestie, if we should say that he wholly and fully parboneth, and they saye that he muste nedes shewe alwaye some rigor with his mercy, & that other-

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spoyle it were to spoyle hym of his nature: Lo howe the Papistes haue treated of the remission of sinnes, so that if a man should say vnto thē that God pardoneth oure sinnes of his mere goodnes, this shold be to them as a blaspheme, for (say they) we must make satisfactiō. And what is ỳ: workes aboue measure, which we do more thā god cōmādeth vs in his law. It is certain ỳ these are detestable sayings. But howsoeuer it be ỳ pore world hath ben so made drōk wt such sorceries. So much ỳ more thē must we note this place wher it is said that God in receiuyng vs to mercy, will entre no more into accōpt with vs, as Ezechias saith here.

Thou haste caste my sinnes behinde thy backe.

It is true that God hath neither backe nor stomack. For we know that his offence is infinite & spirituall: but he vseth thys similitude to signifie that he pardoneth our sinnes like as whē it is said that he casteth thē to the bottom of the sea, ỳ is as much as if he would haue no more remembrance of them nor would haue them more spokē or made mention of. We see then in summe when God receiueth vs in such sort ỳ he is at one with vs, that it is not onely to pardon vs the fault as the Papistes haue imagined and iugle wout reason, but it is to thende that we maye fele his fauor euerye way, and that he wyll persecute vs no more. And in stede that we were afflicted of his hande, and in stede of ỳ he gaue vs by it a testimony of his wrath that contrariwise he maketh vs to know ỳ he taketh vs for his childrē, & that he wil vse vs gētlye shewing the lone ỳ he beareth vs. Lo here in sum what Ezechias meant to say, vsing this maner of speech ỳ god had cast al his sinnes behind his back.

Now true it is that many tymes though God doth pardon vs our faultes yet he wyl not cesse to chastise vs, as it happened to Dauid: but that shal not be but for our commoditie and profit, to thend that we may walke so muche the more warely in tyme to come. I sayde euen nowe that God sendeth his punishement in suche sorte that there remaineth alway some marke to put vs in mynde. Then God wyll surely punyshe vs although he be mercifull vnto vs. But these two thynges are not contrariant, that is, to cast our sinnes behynd his back, and to receyue vs by and by to mercye & make vs prosper by his blessynge, and yet in the meane tyme not to nourishe vs in our idlenesse, but to awake vs & make vs fele some signe of his wrath to preuēt vs. Yet neuerthcles if he meane to declare vnto vs fully the remission of our synnes, he will geue vs oftentymes outwarde signes, that is to saye he wyll geue vs suche a tast of his goodnesse that we may perceiue assuredly that he hathe shewed mercy vnto vs, and that it is impossible that he shoulde vse vs with suche gentlenesse and fauour, except he wold examine our sinnes no more, and that he fully and perfectly acquiteth vs, and that he requireth nothing but that we should walke with him as being made at one and truly reconciled vnto his maiestie. Loe thus God declareth vnto vs the remissiō of our sinnes not only by his worde or inwardlye by his holy spirit, but also by the frutes, that is to say, when by his blessing he maketh vs to prosper, and whē he handleth vs so fauourably that we are compelled to confesse in our own conscience that he vseth a fatherly bountie toward vs.

Then

Then when we ſhall haue theſe ſignes, let vs conclude boldly that God hath pardoned our ſinnes and that he hath caſt them behinde his back, neuer to examine or thinke of them any more. So then ſo ofte as we ſhalbe afflicted of the hande of God, let vs remembre that he hath ſhewed hym ſelfe good not only to thoſe whome he hath taken out of this worlde wher they ſomtime haue endured ſtrong & greuous afflictions, but that he hath alſo pardoned their ſinnes, and let vs knowe that he wyll vſe the ſame goodneſſe toward vs. And in doing this let vs learne to humble our ſelues hereafter. Moreouer the grace of God ſhall ſo muche the more brightlye ſhyne, as he ſhall not onlye handle vs with all ſauour touching our bodies, but alſo in this that he woulde not haue reſpect vnto oure ſinnes, and wyll ſhewe vs that although we did prouoke his wrath and gaue him occaſion alwaye to forſake vs in our myſeries, yet he wyl not handle vs with rigour but that he wil drawe vs vnto hym by his infinite mercye and goodneſſe.

Now let vs throwe our ſelues downe before the maieſtie of our good God, acknowledging our faultes, beſeching him that more and more he will make vs to feele them, and that it may be to humble vs in ſuche ſorte that comming vnto hym we may bring only a pure and ſimple cõfeſſion of our ſinnes, and that in the meane tyme he geue vs ſuche taſt of his goodneſſe that we maye not ceſſe to runne vnto hym although our conſciences doe reproue and cõdempne vs, that we may embrace his grace whiche he hath promyſed in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſte, and as oft as he ma-

keth vs to fele it by experience that we may learn to turne it to our profite, and that we may be so armed against all tentations, that we maye neuer sinke downe vnder the burden, how heauy or troublesome soeuer it be. And that he wyll not only graunt vnto vs that grace, but also to all peoples. &c.

THE FOVRTH SER-mon.

For the graue ſhall not ſinge of the, and the dead ſhall not prayſe the, nether ſhall they that are brought down into the pitte waite for thy truthe. The lyuing, the lyuing ſhall ſing of the, as I do this day: the father ſhall make thy truthe knowen to his children. The Lorde it is that ſaueth me: we wyll ſing a ſong in the temple of the Lorde all the dayes of our lyfe. And Eſai, commaunded, that one ſhold take a cluſter of figges, and make a plaiſter of them to lay vpon the ſore, and he ſhoulde be whole. Then ſayd Ezechias, what ſigne ſhall I haue that I ſhall goe vp into the houſe of the Lorde?

IT is certaine that if our lyfe were ordered as it ought to be, we ſhoulde alway ſhoote at this principall marke, to honour God ſo longe as we be in this woꝛlde. And good reaſon it is ꝙ we applie all our ſtudie therunto ſeing that without ende and ceſſing we proue the gracious good dedes that he doth vs. For this cauſe nowe Ezechias after that he hath knowledged that god prolonged his life, and hath geuen him a proſe to witneſſe his ſingular loue toward him, ſayth ꝙ with ſo muche more courage he wil magnifie the name of

God to cõfesse the receit of so great a benefit. And expressly he sayth that this shall not only be whyle he is in the worlde that he will trauayle to haue the name of God blessed, but he wil endeuour also for his successours that it may for euer be knowē howe God hath wrought for him. Finally for cõclusion he saith that there is no sauiour but God: and if men rest them selues vpon hym their saluation shalbe certain and infallible.

But it may seme straunge that he sayeth that ỹ death nor yet the graue shall not be to prayse god, for it semeth that he accompted vpõ and knoweth no other goodnesse of God but whē he preserueth men in this frayle life. In dede if we loke not but here belowe, our faith shalbe but weake. And we knowe that we lyue to no other purpose but to tast in part the goodnesse of God, to the ende we may be drawen vp hier and altogether rauished to the heauenly lyfe. It semeth then that Ezechias is to muche geuen to the worlde, and that he hath no conceiuing of the spirituall kyngdome of God. For in saying that the graue can not praise God, nor they ỹ be dead, it semeth that he hathe no other regarde but to this present lyfe. And we knowe that it is sayde in the first place, that God will be glorified as wel in our death as in our life. And S. Paul for the same cause sayeth, that he careth not whether he lyue or die, so the glorye of God might be alway auaunced. There appeareth to be great diuersitie betwene S. Paul and Ezechias, for the one fleeth and abhorreth death, alleging that those whiche are departed shall not prayse God, the other saith it is to me al one whether I lyue or dye, for God shall alwaye be glorified in

fied in me. If we beholde the estate of those that are departed in that, that they are drawen oute of this worlde, and that God hath taken them nerer to him, it is likely that they shold be better disposed, & more chearfull to bleſſe his name. Fourthly we be here heauely loden in this prison of oure body, we can not half (as a man may say) opē our mouth to praise God, we goe not with a free courage nor with so vehement feruor of zele, as were requisite: now the dead are not so encombred, they are not absent from God as we are (as S. Paule speaketh in the seconde to the Corinthians) they may then so muche the better agree with the angeles of paradise in this melodie. And we know we what is said of the angels (as it is to be sene in the vi. Cha. of Esay) that without ceasing they cry, blessed be the Lorde of hostes, the holy, the holy, the holy. Then as farre as we may iudge, those whom God hathe drawen out of this transitorye life, ought to be more readye to prayse hys name. But let vs firste marke that Ezechias here had respect to the cause why God placed vs in thys worlde, and wherfore he kepeth vs therin. He asketh not any reward of vs. He is not lyke vnto a man that setteth seruauntes in his houſe: for that doer to empyow his lands, & make profite therof, nether is he like vnto a great prince which requireth to haue manye subiectes, for that he is to be maintened and succoured by them when he hathe nede. But God seketh no auauntage by vs, as he hathe no nede: Onely he will that we do homage to hym for all the benefites y he geueth vs. For all our life ought to be applied to this marke, (as euen now we haue touched) y we bleſſe god, 2. Cor. 5.

and

and render witnes that his benefits were not cast away vpon vs as they should be if we were lyke dōme men. Lo this it is that we haue to obserue, that Ezechias (in sayinge that the lyuynge shall praise God) meant to note, that men peruert the order of nature whē they apply not themselues to praise God, and that theyr vnthankfulnes is by no meanes excusable, when they bury the graces of God and put them in oblivion. Seyng it is so thē that our Lord requireth of vs nothyng but ꝑ hys name be glorified in the world, it is not to be mer-veyled that Ezechias saieth: the liuing, the lyuing shall praise God.

We must also note what difference is betwene the state of the liuing and of the dead. Though the dead praise god, yet we can not iudge nor imagine that they assemble after our maner to shewe an agrement of theyr fayth. Eche one of them cā right well praise God by him selfe, & yet it meaneth not that they ar gathered together in one body, as we frenowe, for the scripture saieth nothing therof. And we maye not forge fantasies of oure owne braine as we thinke good. For we know that god reserueth this perfection to the latter day that we should be all vnited and in suche sort ioyned vnto our God that his glory should fully shine in vs. For as muche then as they which are departed haue not suche a manner of exercysinge them selues in the praysynge of God as we, therefore it is said that, that is a thynge properly perteynyng to vs that be lyuyng.

But there is yet more. For Ezechias speaketh not here simply of death as we haue touched alreadye, but he setteth oute hys death to be suche

as if he had bene cut of from the Churche of God, and from all hope of saluation, when this iudgement was come to be executed, or as if he had bene before hys Iudge: Then Ezechias prepared not him selfe to dye, as by nature we can not flee thys necessitie: but he had thys testymonye of Godes wrath, wherewith he was so feared as if all were lost to hym. Nowe we knowe that no man can synge the prayses of God excepte he haue occasion and matter. For whan oure Lorde sheweth vs a terrible countenaunce, oure mouthes are stopped, we are fylled wyth suche anguisshe, that it is impossible for vs to blesse hym. Rather contrariwise there shall be nothynge but gnashynge of teethe, when the wrath of God shall so astonishe vs. Loe thus stoode Ezechias. On the other syde, when God sheweth hym selfe mercyfull towarde vs, and vttereth some signe of hys fauor toward vs, he openeth oure mouthes, as it is sayde in the li. Psalme. Lorde thou haste opened my mouth: therefore wyll I synge thy songes. And in other places. Lorde thou haste put a newe songe in my mouthe, by thys the Prophete signyfieth when God maketh them ioyfull for theyr deliuerannce from some euyll, that by thys meane, he styrreth them vp to synge hys songes, and to blesse hys name, and to be myndefull of hys benefytes. So then, when we conceaue nothynge but altogether terrour in God, we are in a swounde, and then the gate is shutte so that we can not prayse God. So Ezechias in this place, sayinge that the dead shall not praise god, meaneth not generallye all those that departe oute of this transitorye lyfe, but

Psal. 51.
Psal. 40.

but those whiche are as it were cut of from God, and are confounded with his wrath, who also taste not his goodnes any maner of way, & are made naked and estranged from all hope of healthe. It is then impossible that such should praise God.

There is yet another point to note. For when the faithfull are holden downe & oppressed wyth any distresse, they se nothing but theyr own griefe, and euery man hath experience of this in him selfe to much. When any euyll hath cast vs downe altogether, we can not applie oure selues to anye other thyng, for we are there holde fast as in a streight prison. So was Ezechias, as also it is said in the lxxxviii. Psalme. That the state of those that are dead, is a land of forgetfulnes: men knowe not there what God is. This semeth to be a blasphemie. But these maners of spech procede of the vnskilfulnes and weakenes of men, that is bicause they can not withdraw them selues to iudge with a setled sence, & to haue a well framed and ordered knowledge. But the trouble so vexeth & carieth them awaye that they speake as at random & confusely. Behold, Iob saieth that men beyng taken out of this worlde haue no more carefulnesse, but euery one is at rest, as if there were a confuse mixture, that the maister & the seruet were all one, and that the tyrant shoulde cause no more terror. He speaketh of the state of those that are departed, as if death should destroy all thinges. Yet he had not such opinion, but it was bicause that his sorow suffred him not to speak as a mā at rest. For he was tossed with such vnquietnes that his wordes wāndred. So may we think of Ezechias. He speaketh not of the estate & condition of those that are departed

Iob. 3.

parted as the scripture teacheth vs, and why? his heauines, & the horrour which he had conceiued bare rule ouer him in such sorte that he wist not where he was: it is true ỹ this is not for excuse.

And thus therfore oure Lorde geueth vs mirrours of our frailenes when we see that the most holy, & most perfect speak so. Yet in ỹ meane time God supported Ezechias, because the principall thing remained with him still, as we haue alreadi sene, that he tended to this mark to glorifie the name of God, for he had rather die a hundred tymes than to be one minute in this world prophesninge by vnthankfulnes the benefites that God hath done for him. Lo than Ezechias keepeth this rule that men ought not to desire to liue one daye but to that end that God might be glorified in it. But in the meane time this ỹ he was tossed with so great troubles that he could not orderly speake as he ought, proceded of his weakenes, which God holdeth for excused and supporteth. For it is not a disobediẽce, though we haue many ranging wordes in our prayer. It is true that we ought alway to frame our selfes to his rule, which is geuen vs, to thend that euery man pray to God, not at aduenture, and after his own fantie. But howsoeuer it be, we shall haue measurable sorowes, & complaintes in vs, and it behoueth that god haue pitie of vs in this behalfe. Loe in a summe what we haue to learne, that aboue all, while we lyue, we alway tend to this ende that God be honored. For therfore it is he ỹ hath set vs in this worlde, to that end it is that he hath chosen vs to be of his flok, to wete, that we might be assembled to singe his prayses with one accorde.

And

And we see this yet better in the 115. Psalme, where is a lyke sentence. And it is not one man that speaketh, but the whole body of the Churche of the faithfull, which say that one can not prayse God in death, but we that liue (say they) vnto the ende shall confesse that god hathe preserued vs. There it is signified vnto vs that God wil alway kepe his church, and that he will haue some people remaining vnto the ende of the worlde. Why? because he wyll be knowen the father and sauioure among men. And although it be not of the greater multitud, yet wil he haue some company that shal praise him. So then let vs learn to exercise our selues in blessynge the name of God while he keepeth vs here below, and while we be nourished by his liberalytie, and while (whiche more is) he calleth vs vnto him to tend alway to the hope of the eternall heritage. Sithe then it is so, let vs applie all our study therunto, yea all the daies of oure lyfe. If we do otherwise, it were better for vs that our mothers had bene deliuered of vs before our time, or that the earth had gaped to swallow vs vp, thus to be here gluttons, as brute beastes, and to continue vnthankfull for so manye benefites as God hath geuen vs, and that his praise shoulde be buried by vs. Take this for a note.

The residue: Let vs alwaye be ready folowyng the example of S. Paule, to glorifie God, be it by life, be it by death. If at any tyme we be in trouble as the good kynge Ezechias was, let vs know that all our sorowes, complaintes and groninges, oughte to be suspicious vnto vs, bycause we can not kepe measure by reason of the frailtie

So

that is in vs.

So that this which is sayd here, The dead shall not prayse God, may not be drawen of vs for a consequent proue, to pleade with God when it shall please him to call vs vnto him. Let vs not make this excuse vnder pretext of Ezechias, or Dauid who spake so in the vi. Psalme, or of all the people as we shall alledge. For there was excesse, bycause as well Dauid as Ezechias, and generally al the Churche then when a horrible dissipation was neare tempted as if god wold reiect them, and vtterly disclaime in them, and wouldе haue no more to do with them. As they then were pulled backe from God, so were they abashed. And no marueil. Let vs not therfore make therof a rule, as if we might do the like: but let it serue to make vs knowe our owen weakenes. Moreouer although God do support vs, yet let vs not please our selues in suche a vyce. Loe this it is that we haue to learne.

Nowe we are taughte for as muche as God hath made vs to fele his graces, to haue our hertes set at large, and our mouthes opened to bleſſe his name. And on the other side that we can not pronounce one worde to his prayse, whiche procedeth from a good hartie affectiō, except we be throughly perswaded in this, that God is mercyfull vnto vs, & that we vse to our profit the benefits which we receaue of his hande.

As touchinge the firſte pointe, let euerye one learne to styrre vp him selfe accordynge to that whiche hereceyueth of the graces of God, for the number is infinite.

Thou

There is none of vs when he shall duely consider him selfe, but ought to be rauished as it is saide in the xl. Psalme, that if we wyll number the testimonies that God hathe geuen vs of the fatherlye care which he hath for vs, and of his mercye, they are mo than the heares of our head, and we shalbe therat as it were astonyshed. But accordynge as God setteth fourth the richesse of his goodnes toward euery one of vs, let vs be so muche the more moued to blesse his name, & let euery one exercise and pricke him selfe forward vnto that. Lo this is in summe that whiche we haue to marke vpon this place.

Now on the other side, let vs confesse that our lyfe is cursed if we gluttonously deuoure the good thinges that God geueth vs and do not therin behold his goodnes. For we vnchristianly abuse all that which was apointed for our vse and saluation vnlesse we be brought to this point that God sheweth him selfe a very father vnto vs, and that by all meanes of gentilnesse he draweth vs vnto him, that we should not doubt that he taketh vs for his children. And in this also we see how miserable is the state of Papistes, for they will not assure them selues of the goodnes of God, but saye that alwaies we must be in doubt of it. And so all theyr prayeng and thanksegeuyng to God, is nothing but Hypocrisie and fainting. For we can not call vpon the name of God but with assaunce, we can not praise his name except we know that he is fauourable vnto vs. Then they are altogether excluded. Let vs learn then that we can neuer offer to God a sacrifice of thãkesgeuing which he esteemeth and setteth by, and that we can neuer attein

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to the right scope of ourc life, vnlesse we be fully perswaded of his goodnes. And so as ofte as we thinke vpon all the graces and benefites of God: let this come into our minde, that God doth confirme and ratifie vnto vs his adoption to the ende that we maye not doubte that he compteth vs as his children, and that we freely call vpon him as our father: Lo in a summe what we haue to learne of this place.

Nowe we must also note this which Ezechias saieth. The lyuing, the lyuing shal prayse thee? Yea the father shall declare to his children thy verite. He had said before that the dead shal not wait any more for the truth of God, that is to say, they shall haue no hope. And in this we see that which I haue touched, that Ezechias speaketh not indifferently of all these whom God hath taken out of this worlde. For it is certeine that the faithfull do waite vpon the truth of God. When Iacob yeldyng vp his spirite, saide: I wyll waite for the saluation of the Lorde. He saide not that for one minute, but he declared and protested that he had this assurance imprinted in his hert, which shold neuer be pulled out, so ỹ though he passed thyough a hundred deathes yet alway this treasure should remayne with him. Nowe then the saintes and faythfull although God called thē out of the worlde ceased not alway to nourishe the hope of the resurrection, and of this felicitie which is promised thē. But Ezechias speaketh of the departed, whiche are as it were banished and estranged altogether from the kyngdome of God whome also he forsaketh. Nowe, he was euen in the same estate in his own cōceit vntil god cōforted him by his prophet.

For ẏ message which was sẽt to him, was to shew that God was his enemy, and that he came as his aduersary with armed hande against him. Than was Ezechias driuen to remayne confounded. Then it is not without a cause that he saide, that those which are departed, waite not for the truth of God, that is to say, that they ar altogether shut out frõ the promisses, so as they are no more of the number of his children.

But nowe he saieth that the lyuinge whiche tast the goodnes of God, shall cause theyr children to knowledge hys truth. Nowe here we se again how God shalbe duely praised and honored amõg vs, that is, when a man shall knowe that he is faithfull to all his owne, that he neuer forsaketh them, but that his helpe is ready for them in their necessitie, and that they shall neuer be disapointed which leane vnto him. Lo this is the true substaunce of Gods praise. So in a summe we se that it is nothing but falshede and lies when men shall pray vnto God, and shall make as thoughe they gaue thankes vnto him, & in the meane time they are not instructed of the loue ẏ God beareth them nor certified of theyr saluation, and shall knowe of no promise. Then when that wanteth, it is certaine that all theyr prayses of God, whiche maye be sounded in the mouthes of men, are but winde, and smoke. Wyll we then prayse God as it appertayneth, in suche maner as he alloweth the sacrifices whiche we shall offer vnto hym of praise, and thankes geuinge? Let vs profit in his word, lette vs knowe what it is, to truste in hym, which we canne not doe tyll he declared hys good wyll

towards

towarde vs, and haue certyfyed vs that he hathe receaued vs, ꝙ we may frely come vnto hym, and that we shal neuer be forsakē, so we fle vnto hym. If we haue not suche an instruction, we can neuer pronounce one worde of Goddes prayses as we oughte. Loe hereunto it is to be applyed, that Ezechias sayeth here, that the father shall make knowen vnto hys chyldren the trewth of God.

Moreouer, where as he sayeth, that the dead can not wayte for it, nor leane vnto it. Lette vs knowe, that for as muche as God declareth hymselfe mercyfull and lyberall vnto vs, that is alwaye the more to confyrme oure hoope: That we shoulde take so muche the more courage to runne vnto hym, and not to doubte that he hathe hys hande alwaye readye to helpe vs at neade.

Howe then shall we vse the graces of God as we oughte? When we shall be alwaye confyrmed more and more in the faythe, when we cannne dyspyse all temptations, when we cannne resolue oure selues, that in callynge vpon God, we oughte in no wyse to feare the losse of oure laboure, for as muche as oure hope shall neuer be confounded.

When then we shall be well satisfyed in thys, so as we maye fyghte agaynste Sathan, to beate backe all temptations, beholde howe we maye wyselye applye the benefytes of God to oure owne vse, and howe wee maye take profyte of theym: Loe in a summe what wee haue heare to learne.

Moreouer, when he speaketh howe fathers ought to behaue themselues towarde theyr chyldren we haue to gather in generall (as hath bene said here before) ꝑ it is not ynough ꝑ we procure that god be glorified during our life, but we ought to desire as his name is immortall so that frō age to age it may be honored, & that those which shall come after vs, may kepe ꝑ pure religiō, & that the seruice of God may neuer fall in decaye. That it maye be followed and aduaunced alwaye and that the goodnes of God maye be euery where magnified. They that haue childrē, let them knowe that God hath committed them incharge to thē, & that they muste rendre an accompt if they beestowe not all trauaill to teache them to serue God. For when it is sayd that the father shall shewe to his childrē the truth of god, we must alwai come to this end. Why? to this ende that the children may truste in him, that they may call vpon him, that they maye geue to him the prayse of all good thynges, ꝑ they may dedicate & cōsecrate thē selues wholy to him, & to his obediēce. Thē if fathers will discharg thē selues of theyr duties, let them knowe that this is the principall heritage that they ought to leaue to theyr children. But if they heape vp goods & yet geue them the bridle when they shall see them dissolute, mischieuous, wicked despisers of God. Woe be to them in that they shall take peine to aduance them in this world: for they lift them vp very hye to make them break theyr neckes, & theyr fal shall be more deadly when they shal haue store of goodes: and yet in the meane tyme they shall despyse God in his doctrine, there confusion shalbe more hor-

horrible, because theyr vnthankfulnes shalbe lesse excusable. Let the fathers then thinke better of this thē they haue bene accustomed, that is to say, when God geueth them children, he bindeth them to this charge, that they endeuor so much ẏ more, that they may be instructed in his truth, so long as as they lyue, as also we se therample geuen vs in Abraham, which is the father of the faithful. For when God meant to shewe that Abraham would gouerne his house, as appertened: Shall I hyde from my seruaunt Abraham (saith he) that which I haue to do? No. Lo howe God maketh hym selfe familiar with him. For (saieth he) he shal instructe his children in my statutes, in my lawes, & in my ordinances: Lo, this is the marke whereby the faithfull are knowen frō the despisers of God. If then we will be numbred in the church, let vs folow this zele, and this affection of Abrahā, that euery one accordynge to the familie that he hath, trauaile that God be honoured in it, and that hys truth be alway knowen euen to the ende.

Nowe for conclusion Ezechias saieth: The Lorde it is that shall saue me. This worde doeth import that he despiseth and throweth awaye all other safegarde, as if he should saye, there is none but God. He might haue said: The Lord hath saued me. He might haue said: I hold my life of him and of his mere grace. But he goeth further, as if he meant here to mainteine the honor of God, and to beate down all the affiances that men conceiue in theyr fantasie. For we are wonte to make our discourses when we mynde to mainteine ourselues, and when we seke to be assured, we take this meane, and that meane.

Nowe Ezechias forsaketh all and declareth that there is none but God, and that he it is whom we ought to go vnto.

True it is that God suffreth vs to vse all the meanes that he offreth vs, and he hathe ordeyned them for that vse, but yet he wyll not that his glorye be darkened, as it is no reason it shoulde be. Neuertheles men be so wicked and frowarde, that alway they take occasion to minishe the glorye of God vnder this coloure that he helpeth them by his creatures. If God hath not bene content only to make vs fele his owne vertue, but also applieth al his creatures to our vse we ought to be so much the more styrred to prayse him. But cleane contrary, we robbe him of his right, we forsake him, and fasten our affiaunce here, and there, and we thinke that oure saluation procedeth from thys thing and from that. Lo how God is defrauded of his ryght. So much the more ought we to marke this that is here sayd by Ezechias. The Lorde it is that saueth vs. That is, thoughe the Lorde do stretch his hande vnto vs, and geueth vs wherewith to be mainteined, yet let vs confesse that he is the fountain, and let the riuer that floweth frō him vnto vs, not hinder vs to knowe whence the riuer commeth. Let vs then tende alway to thys welfayring that God be glorified, and that he kepe his owne wholy: and after, when we are made naked of all other meanes, let vs say: the Lord alone shall suffise. And for this cause saith Dauid. The mercye of God is more worth than all lyues, not meanyng that the lyfe of men is not of the mercye of God, but he sheweth ỹ men ought not to be fast bound here vneth, ỹ that they are become brutish

when

when they thinke to preserue, mainteine, or warrant them selfes by this, or that mercy, & that they ought aboue all thinges to preferre the only goodnes of God and to rest in the same. So then beholde here a saying of great doctrine, if we cā haue skil to take profite therof. Let vs then folowe the example of Ezechias, and when God hath succored vs at our nede: let vs geue him the prayse for our life confessinge ỹ there is none but he alone to saue vs. Herunto he addeth againe. And we wyll singe our songes all the dayes of our life in ỹ house of the Lord. Here he repeteth agayne the saying that he spake before, that is, that he will employe all the residue of the life that god hath geuē him to make to God acknowledgement therof, that he might not be foūd vnthākful. For as I haue said it were better that we had neuer bene borne, than to enioy ỹ good things that God hath done for vs, and yet to haue oure mouth close and to thinke no more vpon him. Let vs then note well that thys repetion is not superfluous when Ezechias saieth so manye times that sith his lyfe is prolonged, he wyll be so muche the more stired to prayse God. Take this for one note.

Now, he furder sheweth that this shal not be for a sodein braide, as many can wel praise God by a merely vehement affection, when they haue had prose of his goodnes, but that droupeth awaye by and by, and the memory is lost of it, & they thynke that it is enough ỹ at one time they haue testified ỹ thei thāk God for the good ỹ thei haue receiued. But Ezechias sheweth vs ỹ we ought to cōtinue therin by a true perseuerāce, for we are beholdē to god no more for one day of our life thā for another

It

It must therfore be fully dedicate & auowed vnto him. So seyng the slouthfulnes and coldnes that is in vs, let vs learn to styrre vp our selues when we shall fele that oure zele waxeth colde for feare lest it be wholy quenched. Let vs awake. How? If I haue once or twise reknowledged the grace of God. What is that? must it be now forgotten? And if I bielle the name of God duringe one moneth, a yere, or two, or thre: And now I think no more of it. To what purpose shal ỹ serue me? but to make me so much ỹ more egi tie of hipocrisie, & to shew ỹ ther was nothing but a firt of stubble, that there is no constancie nor stedfastnes. If then we beholde well the exanple of this good kynge, we shall euery one be the more pricked forwarde, to fede our selues no more in this idlenes whiche is naturall vnto vs, and wherevnto we be to muche enclined.

When he sayeth, In the house of the Lorde. He meaneth not that the prayses of God shoulde be enclosed within the tẽple, for euery man in hys owne house maye and ought to praise God. But Ezechias sheweth that it is not ynoughe that he prayseth God in secrete, but that he wyll styrre vp other, to haue more companye. He speaketh here of a solemne sacrifice of praise which he wil make to God in a great assemblie. And for this same cause our Lorde hathe wylled his to gather together. For he was able ynough to haue taught thẽ perticulerly if he would, & to saye: Let euery man prayse me in his chãber. But his pleasure is that there be this policie, that we be knit together in one body, that we call vpon him with one mouth, and that we make confession of our fayth with one

accord:

accord. And why so? True it is, that firste we see that it behoueth that all oure senses be applied to glorifie him, but there is also a seconde point, that euery one stirre vp other as we haue nede, for there is none of vs that feleth him self disposed to praise God, but he hathe yet a pricke forwarde when he shall see the company of the faithfull, and example shewed him. For asmuche therfore as this doeth stirre vs vp, God willeth that openly and in common we sing his praises. And for this cause Ezechias saieth expressly that he will go to the temple of the Lorde to praise and blesse his name, as we se also that Jonas dyd the lyke. He speaketh of *Jonas.2.* house of the Lorde, and why? not (as I said) that the praises of the Lorde are there shut vp & hidde but for that the people there assemble together, & for that he knew that this should bring more profite because there shoulde be some that shoulde be stirred vp by his example. Lo in a sum the songe of Ezechias.

Now in the end it is here recited that ỹ Prophet Esay commaunded to make him a plaster of figges vpon his wounde, wherby it is likely that it was a pestilence which he had. And after he by and by addeth ỹ Ezechias also demaūdeth a token which is graunted him, as we se when the sonne was drawē back of his course vpon the diall of Achas. A man mighte here moue a question, whether thys playster were for medicine, or a token that the Prophet gaue him. And it semeth that if it had ben for medicine, it should haue diminished the glory of God, for it behoued that Ezechias life should be miraculous. Why did he not then heale him without any meane? But when all shalbe

well

well considered, the signe or miracle that was geuen to Ezechias whē the sonne stayed his course, and when the shadowe of the dyall was drawen back so many degrees, was sufficient, and toke awaye all doubt. Moreouer although Ezechias vsed this plaister it is not therfore to be saide that his healyng was naturally wrought, for sith God had chaunged the order of the heauen, and shewed a witnesse so euident that this proceded from his hande, and that it was an extraordinary benefite, we ought to content our selues with that, and we see many times that God is serued with his creatures and yet he hath sufficientlye declared that it was his owne power only.

They whiche thinke that Ezechias rather had this plaister as a sacrament to confirme hym, doe thinke that the figges would more haue hurt his woundе than helped it. But a man maye make a compound of them to ripe a sore, and that is commonly knowen. True it is that God sometime geueth signes that seme cleane contrary, and that is to drawe vs the more to him, to make vs forsake our owne fantasies and hold vs content with that whiche he hath spoken. As how? God promiseth that the worlde shall neuer be destroyed with water, and what signe geueth he therof? a signe that naturally threateneth vs raine. When we see the rainbowe, what token is it? it is such a drawyng together of waters, that maketh seme we shall all be ouerwhelmed and the earth shal perysh. And how so? This signe is geuen vs of God to make vs knowe that therth shal neuer be destroied with ouerflowynge of water. Yea but it is to make vs learne to stay vpon his truthe and to stoppe our

eyes

eyes against all the rest, and against al that we cō-
tayne in our selues, and that the truthe of God be
of so sufficient credit with vs, that we receyue it
without gainsaying. So thē God worketh wel in
suche sorte: but as to this place, we maye rather
iudge that the Prophet to allwage the griefe of
Ezechias gaue hym thys remedye, lyke to a
fyre that burneth a man. And so when GOD
hadde prolonged the lyfe to this good kynge, he
would yet of abundant grace adde this goodnesse
also, that the paine should be mitigate. Then the
prophet gaue hym this as it wer an ouerplus that
God had not only prolonged his life, but also would
not haue him endure so muche or suffer the tor-
mentes whiche he felt before.

Thus behold howe in all and euery waye God
hath declareth him selfe pitiful towarde this good
king, how he would shewe him selfe pacified alto-
gether after that he had vsed suche roughnes to-
ward him and had stretched out his arme as if he
wold haue altogether ouerwhelmed him, but this
meaneth not ỹ God doth ỹ very same to euery one
of his children, to the ende ỹ we should not aske that
in one minut of time God make vs glad after he
hath drawen vs out of the graue and hath geuen
vs thoroughlye to content vs, but that it maye be
his pleasure by litle and lytle to geue vs ease of all
our greues, in the meane time lette vs be content
with this.

And in dede we may gather that God hetherto
hath wrought by degrees in Ezechias: for this mi-
racle was done since the shadow of the sonne was
drawen backe, and the message of prolonging his
lyfe was geuen him by the prophet.

It semeth thē that Ezechias was altogether deliuered, and yet this plaister was also requisite. God then whē our lord after he hath geuē vs anye ease in oure trouble shall leaue some remnaunt of payne: let not that trouble vs, nether let vs be weary of bearyng his correction, vntill he haue healed vs altogether.

Nowe we haue to declare why Ezechias demaunded a signe, for although it wer of weakenes yet God heard him in suche a request, and herein we se howe louynge God is towarde vs, when he doeth not onely graunt the requestes whiche we make of a pure and right affection: but also though there be some infirmitie mingled withall, and that we bear passions somwhat excessiue, yet God hath pitie on vs in this point. Certaine it is that Ezechias when he had perfect faith he was content to haue heard the word from the mouth of the Prophet. Then when he saieth alas shall I not haue some signe: herin he sheweth that he geueth not full and perfect faith to the word of God. But yet he confesseth his fault, and in confessyng it, he asketh remedy: & of whō? of God him self. Then whē we shalbe so encombred, fyrst let vs acknowledge our owne pouertie, and let vs not go about to excuse the euell, but let vs take vpon vs the sentence of condemnation willyngly. If then we aske of God to helpe it by his goodnes, he will succor vs, and heare our requestes.

It is true that it becōmeth not vs to require a signe or miracle when we thinke good, for as it hath bene declared in that place wher the prophet euen nowe made mention of the signe. Ezechias had a spectiall motion vnto it, as Gedeon also had:

Iudi. 6.

Let

Let vs leaue that to ꝯ good pleasure of God, whē we knowe our infirmitie, & pray him to helpe, and to confirme vs to the ende we may be fully satisfied in his worde. Lo then how we muste go forward, and in this doyng we shall fele that this is not writtē oncly for the parson of the kyng Ezechias, but that God would gene it for a common instruction to all his church, that in oure troubles when we shalbe come to the extremitie: yea, to the bottome of hell, we may yet know that we ought to haue our refuge to him that hath called vs, and handled vs so gently, hopinge that he wyll shewe fourthe his strength towarde vs, althoughe for a time it be farre from vs, and that we se no signe of it, & so that he will geue vs mater to glorifie him. and also we are taughte to applye all oure lyfe to to bicille the name of God, and to sing his prayses accordyng as we haue experience of his goodnesse towarde vs.

Now let vs throwe downe our selues before the maiestie of our good God, in acknowledgyng of our faultes, praying him, that more and more, he wyll make vs to feale them, and that this may be to beate vs altogether downe, and humble vs before him ꝯ we may fight with the vyces which make warre against vs, knowyng that our Lord hath ordeyned vs to this conflict, till we be fully renewed and clothed with his iustice, & that there may be no stoppe to let vs frō the obedience of his good will, and that he graunt this grace not oncly vnto vs, but to all peoples and nations. &c.

BRITISH MUSEUM

A MEDITATION OF A PENITENT SINNER: VVRITTEN IN MANER OF A *Paraphraſe vpon the* 51. Pſalme of Dauid.

¶ I haue added this meditation followyng vnto the ende of this boke, not as parcell of maiſter Caluines worke, but for that it well agreeth with the ſame argument, and was deliuered me by my frend with whom I knew I might be ſo bolde to vſe & publiſhe it as pleaſed me.

A MEDITA-
TION OF A PENI-
TENT IN MANER OF A
Paraphrase vpon the
vii. Psalme of Dauid.

¶ The preface, expressing the passioned minde of the penitent sinner.

THe hainous gylt of my forsaken ghost
So threates, alas, vnto my febled spirite
Deserued death, and (that me greueth most)
Still stand in fyrt before my dasèld sight
The lothesome filthe of my disteined life,
The mighty wrath of myne offended Lorde,
My Lord whos wrath is sharper than the knife,
And deper woundes than dobleedged sworde,
That as the dimmed and forbulled eyen
Full fraught with teares & more & more oppress
With growing streames of the distilled dryne
Sent from the fornace of a grekefull brest,
Can not enioy the comfort of the light,
Nor finde the waye wherin to walke aright:

So I blinde wretch, whome Gods enflamed ire
With pearcing stroke hath thrown vnto the ground,
I midde my sinnes still groueling in the myre,
Finde not the lessay that other oft haue found,
Whome cherefull glimse of gods abounding grace
Hath oft releued and oft with shyning light
Hath brought to ioy out of the dyggye place,
Where I in darke of euerlasting night
Bewayle my woefull and vnhappy case,
And fret my dpeng soule with gnawing paine.
Yet blinde, alas, I groape about for grace.
Whyle blinde for grace I groape about in vaine,
My fainting breath I gather vp and straine;
Wherein, meete it to crye and crye againe,

All

But mercy while I sound with shrieking crye
For graūt of grace and pardon while I pray,
Euen then despeir before my ruthefull eye
Spredes forth my sinne & shame, & semes to saye
In vaine thou prayest forth thy bootlesse noyse
To him for mercy, O refused wight,
That heares not the forsaken sinners voice.
Thy reprobate and foreordeined spyte,
For damned vessell of his heauie wrath,
(As selfe witnes of thy vnbeleuyng hart,
And secrete guit of thine owne conscience saith)
Of his sweete promises can claime no part:
But thee, caytif, deserued curse doeth drawe
To hell, by iustice, for offended lawe.

This horror whē my trēbling soule doth heare,
When markes and tokens of the reprobate,
My growing sinnes, of grace my senslesse cheare,
Enforce the proofe of euerlastyng hate,
That I conceiue the heauens sing to bearre
Against my sinfull and forsaken ghost:
As in the throte of hell, I quake for feare,
And then in present perill to be lost
(Although by conscience seamyth to replye,
But with remorse enforcing myne offence,
Doth argue vaine my not auailyng crye)
With woefull sighes and bitter penitence
To him from whom the endlesse mercy flowes
I cry for mercy to releue my woes.

And then not daring with presuming eye
Once to beholde the angry heauens face,
From troubled spryte I send confused crye,
To craue the crummes of all sufficing grace.

With

With foltring knee I falling to the ground,
Wendyng my yelding handes to heauens throne,
Poure forth my piteous plaint & woefull sound,
With smoking sighes & oft repeted grone,
Before the Lord, the Lord, whom synner I,
I cursed wretch, I haue offended so,
That dredyng, in his wreakefull wrath to dye,
And damned downe to depth of hell to go,
Thus tost with panges and passions of despeir,
Thus craue I mercy with repentant cheere.

A Meditation of a penitent sinner, vpon the 51. Psalme.

Haue mercie vpon me (o God) after thy great merci

HAue mercy, God, for thy great mercies sake,
O God: my God, vnto my shame I say,
Beynge fled from thee, so as I dred to take
Thy name in wretched mouth, and feare to pray
Or aske the mercy that I haue abusde.
But, God of mercy, let me come to thee:
Not for iustice, that iustly am accusde:
Which selfe word Iustice so amaseth me,
That scarce I dare thy mercy sound againe.
But mercie, Lord, yet suffer me to craue.
Mercie is thine: Let me not crye in vaine,
Thy great mercie for my great fault to haue.
Haue mercie, God, pitie my penitence
With greater mercie than my great offence.

And according vnto the multitude of thy mer-

My many sinnes in nomber are encreasde,
With weight wherof in sea of depe despeire
My sinking soule is now so sore oppressde,
That now in perill and in present feare,
I crye: susteine me, Lord, and Lord I pray.
With endlesse nomber of thy mercies take
The endlesse nomber of my sinnes away.

So by thy mercie, for thy mercies sake,
Rise on me, Lord, releue me with thy grace.
My sinne is cause that I so neede to haue
Thy mercies ayde in my so woefull case:
My synne is cause that scarce I dare to crane
Thy mercie manyfolde, whiche onely may
Releue my soule, and take my sinnes away.

cies do away myne offences.

So soule is sinne and lothesome in thy sighte,
So foule with sinne I see my selfe to be,
That till from sinne I may be washed white,
So foule I dare not, Lord, approche to thee.
Dire hath thy mercie washed me before,
Thou madest me cleane: but I am foule againe.
Yet washe me Lord againe, and washe me more.
Washe me, O Lord, and do away the staine
Of vggly sinnes that in my soule appere.
Let flow thy plentuous streames of clensing grace.
Washe me againe, yea washe me euery where.
Bothe leprous bodie and defiled face.
Yea washe me all, for I am all vncleane.
And from my sin, Lord, cleanse me ones againe.

Wash me yet more from my wickednes, and clense me from my sinne.

Haue mercie, Lord, haue mercie: for I know
How muche I neede thy mercie in this case.
The horror of my guilt doth dayly growe,
And growing weares my feble hope of grace.
I feele and suffer in my thralled brest
Secret remorse and gnawing of my hart.
I feele my sinne, my sinne that hath oppressed
My soule with sorrow and surmounting smart.
Drawe me to mercie: for so oft as I

For I knowledge my wickednes, and my sinne is euer before me.

Presume

Presume to mercy to direct my sight,
My Chaos and my heape of sinne with lie,
Betwene me and thy mercies shining light.
What euer way I gaze about for grace,
My filth and fault are euer in my face.

Against thee onelye haue I sinned, & done euill in thy sight.

Graunt thou me mercy Lord: thee thee alone
I haue offended, and offendyng thee,
For mercy loe, how I do lye and grone.
Thou with a lipeareing eye beheldest me,
Without regard that sinned in thy sight.
Beholde againe, how now my spirite it rues,
And wailes the tyme, when I with foule delight
Thy sweet forbearing mercy did abuse.
My cruell conscience with sharpned knife
Doth splat my ripped hert, and layes abrode
The lothsome secretes of my filthy life,
And spredes them forth before thy face of God.
Who shame and dede shamefull cold not refrain,
Shame for my dede is added to my paine.

That thou mightest be founde iust in thy sayinges, and maiest ouercome when thou art iudged.

But mercy Lord, O Lord some pitie take,
Withdraw my soule from the deserued hell,
O Lord of glory, for thy glories sake:
That I may saued of thy mercy tell,
And shew how thou, which mercy hast behight
To sighyng sinners, that haue broke thy lawes,
Performest mercy: so as in the sight
Of them that iudge the iustice of thy cause
Thou onely iust be demed, and no moe,
The mouthes iniustice wholy to confound:
That damning me to deth of during woe
Iust in thy iudgement shouldest thou be found:
And from deserued flames releuyng me

Iust

Iust in thy mercy mayst thou also be.

For lo, in sinne, Lord, I begotten was,
With sede and shape my sinne I toke also,
Sinne is my nature and my kinde alas,
In sinne my mother me conceiued: Lo
I am but sinne, and sinfull ought to dye,
Dye in his wrath that hath forbydden sinne.
Such bloome and frute loe sinne doth multiplie,
Such was my roote, such is my inyse within.
I plead not this as to excuse my blame,
On kynde or parentes myne owne gilt to lay:
But by disclosing of my sinne, my shame,
And nede of helpe, the plainer to displaye
Thy mightie mercy, if with plenteous grace
Thy plenteous sinnes it please thee to deface.

For loe, I was shapen in wickednes, and in sinne my mother conceiued me.

Thou louest simple sooth, not hidden face
With truthelesse bilour of deceiuing showe.
Lo simplie, Lord, I do confesse my case,
And simplie craue thy mercy in my woe.
This secrete wisedom hast thou graunted me,
To se my sinnes, & whence my sinnes to growe:
This hidden knowledge haue I learnd of thee,
To fele my sinnes, and howe my sinnes to showe
With such excesse, that with vnfained hert,
Dreding to drowne, my Lorde, lo howe I flee,
Simply with teares bewailyng my desert,
Releued simply by thy hand to be.
Thou louest truth, thou taughtest me the same.
Helpe, Lord of truth, for glory of thy name.

But lo, thou hast loued trueth, the hidden and secrete things of thy wisedome thou hast opened vnto me.

With swete Hysope belyrinkle thou my spyite:
Not such hysope, nor so belyrinkle me,

Sprinkle

As

me, Lorde, with hisope and I shalbe cleane: washe me and I shalbe whiter then snow.

As law vnperfect shade of perfect lyghe
Did vse as an apointed signe to be
Foreshewing figure of thy grace behight.
With death and bloodshed of thine only sonne.
The swete hysope, cleanse me defyled wyght.
Sprinkle my soule. And when thou so hast done,
Bedeawd with droppes of mercy and of grace,
I shalbe cleane as cleansed of my synne.
Ah wash me, Lord: for I am foule alas:
That only canst, Lord, wash me well within.
Wash me, O Lord: when I am washed soe,
I shalbe whiter than the whitest snowe.

Thou shalt make me heare ioye and gladnesse, al the bones which thou hast broken shal reioyse

Long haue I heard, & yet I heare the sounde
Of dredfull threates and thonders of the law,
Which Echo of my gylty minde resoundes,
And with redoubled horror doth so draw
My listening soule from mercies gentle voice,
That louder, Lorde, I am constraynde to call:
Lorde, pearce myne eares, & make me to reioyse,
When I shall heare, and when thy mercy shall
Sounde in my hart the gospell of thy grace.
Then shalt thou geue my hearing ioy againe,
The ioy that onely may relieue my case.
And then my brosed bones, that thou with paine
Hast made to weake my febled corps to beare,
Shall leape for ioy, to shewe myne inward chere.

Turne away thy face from my sinnes, and do a-

Loke on me, Lord: though trẽbling I beknowe,
That sight of sinne so sore offendeth thee,
That seing sinne, how it doth ouerflowe
My whelmed soule, thou canst not loke on me,
But with disdaine, with horror and despite.
Loke on me, Lord: but loke not on my sinne.

For

Not that I hope to hyde it from thy ſight,
Which ſeeſt me all without and eke within.
But ſo remoue it from thy wrathfull eye,
And from the iuſtice of thyne angry face,
That thou impute it not. Looke not how I
Am foule by ſinne: but make me by thy grace
Pure in thy mercies ſight, and, Lord, I pray,
That hateſt ſinne, wipe all my ſinnes away.

way all my miſdedes.

Sinne and deſpeir haue ſo poſſeſt my hart,
And hold my captiue ſoule in ſuch reſtraint,
As of thy mercies I can feele no part,
But ſtill in languor do I lye and faint.
Create a new pure hart within my breſt:
Myne old can hold no liquour of thy grace.
My feble faith with heauy lode oppreſt
Staggring doth ſcarcely creepe a reeling pace,
And fallen it is to faint to riſe againe.
Renew, O Lord, in me a conſtant ſpirite,
That ſtayde with mercy may my ſoule ſuſteine,
A ſpirite ſo ſetled and ſo firmely pight
Within my bowells, that it neuer moue,
But ſtill vphold thaſſurance of thy loue.

Create a cleane hart within me, O God: and renew a ſtedfaſt ſpirit within my bowels.

Loe proſtrate, Lorde, before thy face I lye,
With ſighes depe drawne depe ſorow to expreſſe,
O Lord of mercie, mercie do I crye:
Depriue me not from thy face in my diſtreſſe,
Thy face of mercie and of ſwete releſe,
The face that feedes angels with onely ſight,
The face of comfort in extremeſt greſe.
Take not away the ſuccour of thy ſpirite,
Thy holy ſpirite, which is myne onely ſtay,
The ſtay that when deſpeir aſſaileth me,

Caſt me not away from thy face, and take not thy holy ſpirit from me.

In

In faintieſt hope yet moueth me to pray,
To pray for mercy, and to pray to thee.
Lord, caſt me not from preſence of thy face,
Nor take from me the ſpirite of thy grace.

Reſtore to me the comforte of thy ſauing helpe, & ſtabliſhe me with thy free ſpirit.

But render me my wonted ioyes againe,
Which ſinne hath reft, and planted in theyr places
Doubt of thy mercy ground of all my paine.
The taſt, that thy loue whilome did embrace
My chearefull ſoule, the ſignes that dyd aſſure
My felyng ghoſt of fauor in thy ſight,
Are fled from me, and wretched I endure
Senſleſſe of grace the abſence of thy ſpirite.
Reſtore my ioyes, and make me fele againe
The ſweete retorne of grace that I haue loſt,
That I may hope I pray not all in vayne.
With thy free ſpirite confirme my feble ghoſt,
To hold my faith from ruine and decay
With faſt affiance and aſſured ſtay.

I ſhal teach thy waies vnto the wicked, & ſinnes ſhall be tourned vnto thee.

Lord, of thy mercy if thou me withdraw
From gaping throte of depe deuouring hell,
Loe, I ſhall preach the iuſtice of thy law:
By mercy ſaued, thy mercy ſhall I tell.
The wicked I wyll teache thyne only way,
Thy wayes to take, and mans deuiſe to flee,
And ſuche as lewd delight hath ledde aſtray,
To rue theyr errour and returne to thee.
So ſhall the proofe of myne example preache
The bitter frute of luſt and foule delight:
So ſhall my pardon by thy mercy teache
The way to finde ſweete mercy in thy ſight.
Hyue mercy, Lorde, in me example make
Of fauor and mercy, for thy mercies ſake.

O God, God of my health, my sauing God,
Haue mercy Lord, and shew thy might to saue.
Assoile me, God, from gilt of gilteles blod,
And eke from sinne that I ingrosed ing haue
By flesh and blond and by corrupted kinde.
Upon my blond and soule extende not, Lorde,
Vengeance for blond, but mercy let me finde,
And strike me not with thy reuengyng swoorde.
So, Lord, my loying tong shall talke thy praise,
Thy name my mouth shall vtter in delight,
My voice shall sounde thy iustice, and thy waies,
Thy waies to iustifie thy sinfull wight.
God of my health, from blond I saued so
Shall spred thy prayse for all the world to knowe.

Deliuer me from blond o God, God of my helth & my tong shall ioyfully talke of thy iustice.

La straining cramp of colde deseit againe
In feble brest doth pinche my pining hart,
So as in greatest nede to cry and plaine
My speache doth faile to vtter thee my smart.
Refreshe my yelding hert, with warming grace,
And loose my speche, and make me call to thee.
Lord open thou my lippes to shewe my case,
My Lord, for mercy I oe to thee I flee.
I can not pray without thy mouying ayde,
Ne can I ryse, ne can I stande alone.
Lord, make me pray, & graūt whē I haue praide.
Lord loose my lippes, I may expresse my mone,
And findyng grace with open mouth I may
Thy mercies praise, and holy name display.

Lord, open thou my lippes, and my mouth shal shewe thy praise.

Thy mercies praise, in stede of sacrifice,
With thankfull minde so shall I yeld to thee.
For if it were delitefull in thine eyes,
Or thereby mought thy wrath appeased be.

If thou haddest desired sacri-

Or

shee, I wold haue geuen thou delyest not in burnt offringes.

Of cattell slayne and burnt with sacred flame
Vp to the heauen the vayne smoke to send:
Of guiltlesse beastes, to purge my guilt and blame,
On altars bryde the sauour shold ascend,
To pease thy wrath. But thy swete sonne alone,
With one sufficing sacrifice for all
Appeaseth ther, and maketh the at one
With sinfull man, and hath repaird our fall.
That sacred hoste is euer in thine eyes.
The prayse of that I yeld for sacrifice.

The sacrifice to God is a trobled spirit: a broken and an humbled hart, o god, thou wilt not despise.

I yeld my self, I offer vp my ghoste,
My slayne delightes, my dyeng hart to thes.
To God a trobled spryte is pleasing hoste.
My trobled spryte doth dryede like him to be,
In whome tastlesse languor with lingring paine
Hath febled so the starued appetite,
That foode to late is offred all in vaine,
To holde in fainting corps the fleing spryte.
My pining soule for famine of thy grace
So feares alas the faintnesse of my faithe.
I offre vp my trobled spryte: alas,
My trobled spryte refuse not in thy wrathe.
Such offring likes ther, ne wilt thou despise
The broken humbled hart in angry wise.

Shew fauour, o lord in thy good will vnto Sion, that the walles.

Shew mercie, Lord, not vnto me alone:
But stretch thy fauor and thy pleased will,
To spryede thy bountie and thy grace vpon
Sion, for Sion is thy holly hyll:
That thy Hierusalem with mighty wall
May be enclosed vnder thy defense,
And bylded so that it may neuer fall
By myning fraude or mighty violence.

Defende

Defend thy chirch, Lord, and aduaunce it loe,
So in despite of tyrannie to stand,
That trembling at thy power the world may know
It is vpholden by thy mighty hand:
That Sion and Hierusalem may be
A safe abode for them that honor thee.

of Hierusalem may be bylded.

Then on thy hill, and in thy walled towne,
Thou shalt receaue the pleasing sacrifice,
The brute shall of thy praised name resoune
In thankfull mouthes, and then with gentle eyes
Thou shalt behold vpon thine altar lye
Many a yelden host of humbled hart,
And round about then shall thy people cry:
We praise thee, God our God: thou onely art
The God of might, of mercie, and of grace.
That I then, Lorde, may also honor thee,
Relieue my sorow, and my sinnes deface:
Be, Lord of mercie, mercifull to me:
Restore my feling of thy grace againe:
Assure my soule, I craue it not in vaine.

Then shalt thou accept the sacrifice of righteousnesse, burnt offringes and oblations. then shall they offre yonge bullockes vpon thine altare.

FINIS.